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FANTASY COMMENTATOR

Moskowitz Memorial Issue

Cover: Sam Moskowitz at the Spring 1988 Sercon 3, Louisville, Kentucky

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FANTASY COMMENTATOR

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Articles

Verse

Regular Features

This is the fiftieth issue of *Fantasy Commentator*, a journal devoted to articles, reviews, checklists and verse in the areas of science-fiction and fantasy, published irregularly. Subscription rates: $5 per number, eight numbers for $35, postpaid in the U. S.; foreign postage 75¢ a copy extra. All opinions expressed herein are the individual contributors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the staff as a whole. Manuscripts are accepted for publication subject to editorial revision. Unless correspondents request otherwise, communications of general interest may be excerpted for the letter column, "Open House."

REMEMBERING SAM

Sam Moskowitz was active during most of his life in the fan press, and in addition to obituaries there to mark his passing and accomplishments, many amateur journalists published reminiscences about their own relationships with him. It seemed to me appropriate that these be collected so that both his acquaintances and future historians might know more about the man behind the works. That is what is being undertaken here. I have also solicited additional contributions from others who knew him. No sort of arrangement has been imposed upon these pieces; whether long or short, detailed or general, they are printed below simply in the alphabetical order of their authors' last names. There may be more material like this which I have not seen; if readers know of any, I should be grateful if they would inform me. Potential contributors are welcome to send in their reminiscences as well. If enough are received, a sequel to this group could follow.

—*Editor*

A. VINCENT CLARKE

Robert Lichtman's R. I. P. note about Sam at the end of *Trap Door* #17 brought back memories. Way back in the 1980's, soon after (to everyone's bewilderment) I had returned to fandom, I received a phone call.

"Vincent Clarke?"

"Yes?"

"This is Sam Moskowitz. I'm in London, and I'd like to visit you."

My sense of wonder dropped in a dead faint. Sam Moskowitz? The name which I'd first read in *pre-war* fanzines? It must be a hoax. Some modern fan had read that 1950's fans were fond of hoaxes, I was a born-again 1950's fan, and someone was trying it on. I was getting ready to utter some frivolous reply when that beautiful bass voice with its American accent came again.

"Edward Tubb gave me your phone number."

I gulped. No one, but no one, would ever call that wild card of British fandom anything but 'Ted'——except for one highly regarded serious fan.

"G-good to hear from you Sam. When can you come around?"

We made an appointment for a few hours later, and then I realized I was left with a slight dilemma. I'm not *really* serious now about science-fiction, only about science-fiction fandom. I had a few thousand fanzines, but I didn't think I could bear discussing them in bibliographic detail. And I had some hundreds of s-f zines and books, but I didn't treat them with Sam's sort of respect. What to do?

Terry Hill, who got me back into fandom, said he'd come over. But Terry, who'd himself entered fandom only three or four years previously, wasn't the heavyweight I thought was needed. Suddenly inspiration struck. I luckily happened to have the phone number of Mike Ashley, the author of *The History of the Science Fiction Magazine* (in four volumes, yet) and numerous other works. So I rang him. Yes, he'd be glad to come over.

And the visit went off well. Terry and I handled the lighter stuff, and Mike talked serious s-f with him. Mike had also brought over a bag full of Sam's books for him to autograph. Sam later sent me a couple of issues of *Helios*, his pre-war fanzine. A nice guy.

Of course the most astonishing thing about Sam was that prodigious memory. I wonder if it operated in other aspects of his life, or whether it was a consequence of his immense enthusiasm for science-fiction?

——*Letter, July 28, 1997.*

JOHN CLUTE

Most of us in England did not know Sam Moskowitz in the flesh. We were

not familiar with the angular tough-love rasp of his personality from the 1930's through the 1950's, when he was a dominant early American fan, the chairman of the first WorldCon, the author of *The Immortal Storm*, the first history of fandom, and one of the first writers from within the s-f field——from wholly and utterly within it——to treat s-f as a domain for scholarly study, in essays of "amateur" but pioneering scholarship collected in his books *Explorers of the Infinite* and others. And those of us who did not know him——and who may think of him essentially as a figure from a past era who had throat cancer and spoke Dalek-like through a voice box in recent years——may let pass his recent death just like that.

But that is not quite enough. Those who knew him will write obituaries that evoke the man. The rest of us should perhaps think about s-f, a genre intimately tied to the lives of those that created it as a literature and as a subculture, and who are dying now or dead. Certainly I personally find myself thinking ——as I thought when Isaac Asimov died——that the genre is, inevitably, losing its default voices. That like some vast amoeba trying desperately to recollect the shape of its True Name, s-f had become far too amorphous to know long before Sam Moskowitz ceased his acts of knowing. That he never stopped trying to keep the shape. And that he carried the template of his era down with him when he died.

——*Ansible* #118.

CHESTER D. CUTHBERT

My acquiantance with Sam Moskowitz began with a letter from him dated October 10, 1952. He was editing *Science Fiction +* at the time, and he asked me if I would submit something for the magazine. I had not written any fiction for quite a while, so I had to decline. But Sam did not forget me. A little over a year later he wrote me again, this time for permission to reprint a story I had written a couple of decades earlier, "The Sublime Vigil."

That had originally been published in the February 1934 issue of *Wonder Stories*, and it was, he said, one of his long-time favorites. (Although I did not know it at the time, Sam had written an article about science-fiction tales which he felt were becoming neglected, and "The Sublime Vigil" was first on his list.*) Negotiations proceeded amicably, and eventually the story was included in *Editor's Choice in Science Fiction*, an anthology he edited for the McBride Company in 1934.

After that we continued to exchange letters sporadically over the years, and in early 1987 he wrote me that in May he would be at the upcoming Vancouver science-fiction convention, where he was to be Guest of Honor; Could I meet him there? I wasn't planning to attend the convention, so I suggested that instead he stop off and visit my wife and I on his way there. He agreed, and became our house guest in Winnipeg from May 14th to May 21st.

It so happened that there was also a convention in Winnipeg on the weekend before the one in Vancouver, and Sam planned to be at that one too. He spent five hours a day there, but said he found it disappointing. Before leaving us, in fact, he remarked that his conversation and discussions with me were far more interesting and valuable to him.

Muriel and I found his visit very pleasant. We discussed stories we liked, and I was amazed at the details of them which he remembered. We talked about personalities in the field, and again I marvelled at his vivid recollection of them and of incidents concerning them. Over the years I have kept all of my correspondence, letters from such people as August Derleth, Allen McElfresh, William F. Nolan and Donald Wollheim, and as a historian Sam was of course interested in seeing these. He also reviewed carefully the more recent correspondence with Mike Ashley, John Bell, Glenn Lord and Ronald Gallant. (I might add that Gallant is a former Winnipeger, now living in San Francisco, who published the fanzine *Scientific* when he was a boy; he still writes and visits me.)

*"Forgotten Classics," *Fantasy Commentator III*, 36-42 (1944)——*ed.*

Sam surveyed my collection, and I was able to produce a few items which, surprisingly, he hadn't seen before. He was particularly impressed by my files of Canadian fanzines, and spent several hours going through the material which I had bought from Alastair Cameron in the 1950's when the latter was disposing of his collection.

Sam willingly inscribed and autographed my copies of his more important books. At one point he asked why I contributed so little to fan magazines, and I told him I felt my chief function was to help others. We discussed fandom as a hobby and a way of life, and I said I didn't think it was much different from the more formalized brotherhoods of the Freemasons or the Rosicrucians.

We also talked about his Guest of Honor speech which, appropriately, was to deal with the Canadian scene. Sam actually hadn't yet written it, but he had brought along his notes, including his correspondence with Melvin R. Colby, the managing editor of *Uncanny Tales*. I was therefore able to witness him composing the talk. This he did at the typewriter in a single draft; it ran to twelve pages and took him four hours to complete. He was kind enough to give me a photocopy of this, which I still have. I shall not describe it any further here, however, since the text has been printed elsewhere.†

The only other professional from the old days to visit me was Judith Merrill, who herself died last September, so Sam's visit with us was a highlight in my life. His encyclopedic knowledge of the field and his lifelong personal dedication to it impressed me vividly, and I was startled by his retentive memory and high reading speed. Our parting at the airport was like that of brothers, for although this had been our first meeting, we had established a firm friendship.

—*Letter, July 13, 1997.*

ERIC LEIF DAVIN

The last time I saw Sam, he was waving good-bye as Anita Alverio and I roared out of a Pittsburgh hotel parking lot on my motorcycle. Anita and I live in Pittsburgh, and we'd rendezvoused with Sam at the hotel where he was attending the 1993 Dum Dum convention. It was a convenient place to meet one another in the flesh at last.

On paper, of course, I'd met the science-fiction scholar Sam Moskowitz several decades ago. I first encountered his work while growing up in Phoenix in the late '50's and early '60's when I read his profiles of s-f authors in magazines I bought off the newsstand at the local grocery store. Any magazine carrying a Moskowitz profile somehow seemed to have more heft to it than its myriad competitors whose garish covers also beckoned to me. So when there was a choice, I went for Moskowitz. And when those profiles were later collected as *Seekers of Tomorrow* and *Explorers of the Infinite*, I eagerly bought the books, even though I'd already read their contents.

I followed those with Sam's anthologies of unimaginable antique treasures of s-f that he'd uncovered. I'd always been interested in history, and through Sam I was able to combine my two greatest pleasures: reading history and reading science-fiction. And so for many years Sam remained to me a name on a magazine or book cover, someone I enjoyed reading and learning from. I never had any reason to believe he would ever be anything else.

But about a dozen years ago this changed. Then, for reasons not relevant here, I wrote a long essay, accompanied by a taped interview, on the pioneering science-fiction editor David Lasser. Now, I shall have to admit to you that I find it difficult to write things to order. I tend instead to go wherever my interests carry me——and only then try to find someone who'll publish it. Such

†*Science Fiction Studies 17*, 84-92 (1990)——*ed.*

was the case here——I had no idea where my Lasser essay and interview might be published.

Hoping for some help, I searched out Sam Moskowitz's address and, on June 13, 1986, mailed the piece to him out of the blue. On June 16th he sent me an enthusiastic letter telling me how great and original he thought it was. Further, I should send it to A. Langley Searles for *Fantasy Commentator,* which, he said, was "the very best of the scholarly fantasy magazines" and where most of his essays on s-f history were published. Well, I thought, if that's good enough for him, it's good enough for me.

Sam corrected a few points in my essay, and made an additional suggestion. Because I was probably unknown to Searles, when I submitted it "tell him I suggested it on reading your manuscript, because he has seen my correspondence with Lasser and would swear you stole it if you didn't mention that I had gone over your piece." I did as Sam instructed. I don't know whether Langley discussed my essay and interview with Sam, but I do know that on July 8th Langley wrote me an equally enthusiastic letter saying he would like very much to publish my work in the next issue of *Fantasy Commentator.* And he did.

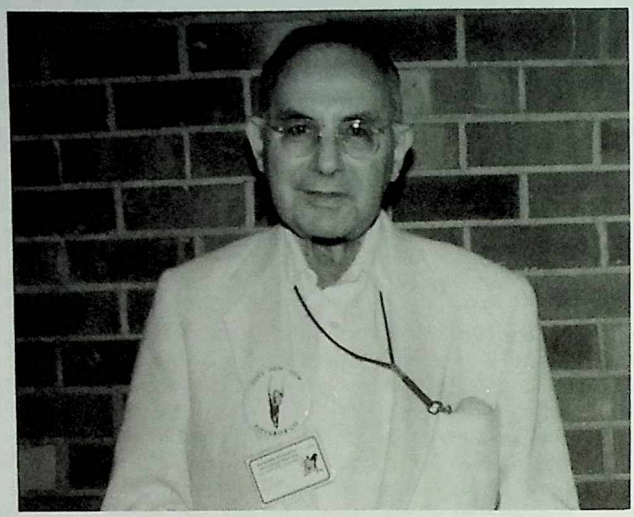
That was the beginning of my personal relationship with both Sam and Langley. In the fourteen years since, I've had several more essays and interviews with science-fiction pioneers published in *Fantasy Commentator.* Each one benefited from helpful "in progress" suggestions from Sam. And there were many other projects he urged me to tackle which unfortunately I just didn't have the time for. Sam accepted me, perhaps not as an equal, but certainly as someone who knew and cared enough about shared objects of affection that he could discuss our unearthing of s-f's distant past as a mutual labor of love. Possibly the most important success which grew out of our relationship was the rescue of all the business correspondence and story manuscripts of the renowned author Stanley G. Weinbaum, an operation in which Norm Metcalf participated. It resulted in a special edition of *Commentator* devoted to new material on Weinbaum, sixty years after his death.

So, when Sam wrote me that he was coming to Pittsburgh for the 1993 Dum Dum, as the annual convention of Edgar Rice Burroughs fandom is called, and that he wanted to meet me, I was thrilled. At last! The man himself!

It was a beautiful sunny summer day when Anita and I rode out to the suburban hotel. We met him in the morning and spent most of the day with him. After all our correspondence we already knew each other very well and felt instantly at ease. Other than the meeting itself, no great or wonderful events transpired. We hung out. We talked. We sat outside at an auction of ERB memorabilia and marvelled at the enormous prices mundane objects associated with Burroughs brought. Even cancelled checks he had written to pay trivial bills commanded amazing sums. Sam laughed at this, and joked that he'd've saved all his own cancelled checks if he'd only known what prices they might bring some day.

Sam bought nothing at the auction, explaining that he already had everything he wanted. "I own a number of Frank Paul paintings," he said, "Originals for various magazine covers. I've been offered fantastic sums for them, but what would I do with the money? I couldn't buy another Paul with it!"

Growing tired of ERBdom's frantic bidding for pieces of the True Cross, we retired to the hotel's restaurant, where Sam treated Anita and myself to an excellent lunch. The lunch stretched into mid-afternoon as he talked about the new projects he was working on and asked about my own. Sam had just finished writing his "autobiography" of John W. Campbell, Jr., based on extensive correspondence he'd recently gained access to. He explained that he knew what even the most obscure references in Campbell's letters referred to because "I was there." And if he didn't recognize immediately what Campbell was talking about, he could eventually ferret out the meaning from his own working library, which I suspect must



Sam Moskowitz, September 1993

Eric Davin, Sam, Anita Alverio

contain almost every fanzine produced from the olden days of science-fiction.

Eventually it was time for us to go. We were all tired from hours of animated conversation, and a long ride lay before us. But the day was not over for Sam; he was still scheduled to participate in some upcoming panel.

Instead of bidding farewell in the hotel lobby, he insisted on walking out to the parking lot with us. For reasons unknown to me, he was fascinated by the fact that I drove a motorcycle, and wanted to watch us leave on it. So we all gathered around the bike in the parking lot. He smiled broadly as Anita and I buckled on our helmets and pulled on our leather gloves. We shook hands and hugged a last time. Then Anita and I climbed on the bike, fired it up, and roared off. As we pulled out into traffic Anita waved to Sam. He waved back, still grinning like a Cheshire Cat. I kept my hands on the handlebars.

I understand from Langley that Sam told him all about my motorcycle when he got back. At the time, his fascination with it surprised me. But since then, I've concluded that he was simply curious about something unfamiliar. That would have been so characteristic of him; even at the age of 73, he was still curious about everything. That's what made Sam such a damned fine friend to science-fiction. He wanted to know absolutely everything there was to know about it——and I think he just about did.

——*May 20, 1997.*

HELEN DE LA REE

I can't recall when my late husband, Gerry, introduced me to Sam, but I know it was before our marriage. We got to know each other in the summer of 1944, when he, Gerry and I took a train trip from Newark to Dover, New Jersey to visit the science-fiction fan Joe Kennedy. What a pleasant day it turned out to be! Those gathering at Joe's home included Donald and Elsie Wollheim and several other young men, all eager to talk about science-fiction. Joe's mother served us a nice luncheon and then we spent the afternoon in the Kennedys' yard.

Gerry had known Sam for some time, of course. He was quite fond of Sam and had a great regard for his literary efforts. However, even if they had not had the common bond of the science-fiction world, I am sure they still would have been good friends who enjoyed each others' company.

Soon after Gerry and I were married, Sam was able to visit our apartment on his lunch hours. He was driving a delivery truck at the time. I can remember many delightful discussions about books and authors while eating sandwiches and drinking our sodas.

When recalling Sam, one pictures him in his younger years, with a booming voice and large strong body. He could dominate a room and take charge just by being in it. Yet it is his quiet, caring nature that I tend to think of.

One day he came to visit us bringing along a friend, Christine Haycock. Sam was eager to show off his lady to us, and Chris soon became his wife. They had a good marriage, each loving and respecting the other enough to give one another the time and space to develop their diverse careers and fields of interest.

Sam was a true collector, savoring all the facets of fantasy and science fiction, as well as the art work in books and magazines that accompanied it. Not only did he save all these published works, but all the letters and notes he ever received. He even had a special file-drawer just for post-cards!

He always seemed a natural leader, and he was also a great organizer. He ran conventions, auctions, and founded the Eastern Science Fiction Association, a New Jersey fan group that was active for over fifty years. And as everyone knows, he was an indefatigable researcher and writer.

Over the years Sam became a true and caring friend, not only to Gerry and me, but to all fans he was close to. When my husband's health was failing,

he assisted us by always being on the look-out for collections he could acquire. He visited faithfully during Gerry's final days, trying his best to cheer him up.

In later years, membership in the Eastern Science Fiction Association dwindled, but gatherings acquired a more informal and intimate quality. I especially looked forward to them. Often I would find myself sitting next to Sam, enjoying cake and coffee, listening to his informative and humorous conversations. He seemed able to speak on almost any subject with interest and authority. He will be sorely missed.

—*Letter, May 12, 1997.*

GORDON EKLUND

This memory is from maybe thirty years ago, during my first sojourn in the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (hereinafter referred to as FAPA). A long since vanished-in-the-haze member of my acquaintance was running for one of the offices——I forget which——and I asked him why. He said, well, he really had only one purpose in mind, and that was to kick Sam Moskowitz out of the organization once and for all. He didn't explain. As I said, this was thirty-odd years ago, and it always amused me, when I returned the FAPA a few years back, to find that Sam was still a member and Fan X long gone. But now Sam's really gone, too.

In the old days I recall a lot of us wondering if he still read the mailings. There were stories about his bragging that he never even cracked open their envelopes. (This was when there were fifty or sixty names on the waiting list, and membership was a Big Thing.) But I've noticed in recent years that Sam almost always voted in the annual egoboo poll and in the (usually uncontested) elections, so I figured he must be reading something, sometime, sharing some interest.

Like many devout science-fiction readers, I knew Sam Moskowitz's name long before I ever heard of FAPA, or even knew that there was such an entity as organized fandom. The articles he wrote, first for *Satellite Science Fiction* and later for *Amazing Stories,* his profiles of classic s-f authors from Verne and Wells to Heinlein and Asimov, I read and reread and read yet again to the point of memorization. They were, you see, almost the only writings I had ever come across that actually talked *about* science-fiction. Before fandom, it was the nearest I could come to having a real conversation about the subject which loomed so vastly important in my thirteen-year-old consciousness, like a shuffling bear roaming through the woods.

I know Sam made a lot of enemies over time. I was never one, though for that matter I had very little personal contact with him——just meeting him briefly in passing at various conventions over the years. But he's someone we're all going to miss, especially in FAPA. His enthusiasm for science-fiction. His adoration of the genre. His feeling that it really was important. I know I'm going to miss reading the rest of his continuation of *The Immortal Storm* that began in *Fantasy Commentator* recently. They don't make fans like Sam Moskowitz any more and I think that's too damned bad, both for science-fiction and for the human race.

—*Sweet Jane #17, Summer 1997.*

PERRY M. GRAYSON

Back in 1995, I was surprised to note that eminent author and editor Sam Moskowitz had joined the black circle of the Esoteric Order of Dagon Amateur Press Association, of which I'd been an acolyte for several years. Similarly, I was shocked to learn of his passing last April. Sam was one of the select few who guided me on the right path towards becoming a writer, editor and scholar of fantastic literature. I can still vividly remember perusing his *Seekers of Tomorrow* as a junior high school student, then later in high school, using it as a valuable

reference on the numerous essays I wrote during my teens. I knew almost nothing about authors like Henry Kuttner, C. L. Moore, Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, save for the fact that I loved their work, but Sam's writings told me everything I wanted to know about their lives——and more. He spoke of magazines I didn't get my hands on until years later——*Astounding Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories* and, most importantly, *Weird Tales*. I have him to thank, in part, for making me the incurable lover of the fantastic I am today.

The summer of 1995 was a sorcerous one for me, filled with research jaunts and pulp- and book-hunting sprees, mostly spent in the company of friends who had a kindred taste for the weird. I had the pleasure of meeting Sam that August during a month-long sojourn on the east coast. I shall never forget the day, which was spent in the company of the "Reliquarians" at Shadow-fanatic Tony Tollin's pad. Joining Sam, Tony and myself were my friend and fellow E. O. D. member Ben Indick, fantasy artists Steve Fabian and Edd Cartier, and Joe Wrzos, who (as Joseph Ross) edited *Amazing* and *Fantastic* in the late 1960's. I wasn't expecting Sam to welcome my presence at this gathering, seeing that I'd written him recently regarding Frank Belknap Long's association with the old digest magazine *Satellite Science Fiction*. But he was warm and congenial, despite being (I suspect) in continual pain from the cancer that had plagued him for several years. He had given me precise citations from sources in his own vast collection, and those he supplemented in person with reminiscences about the old pulp days and his own recollections of Long, whom he had known well. (All of these will form an intrinsic part of the Long biography which I am presently writing.) Sam's lucid memory and warm sense of humor were very much apparent in his conversation. And I shall never part with my copy of *Explorers of the Infinite*, which he inscribed and autographed for me that memorable New Jersey afternoon.

Sam's work pervades the entire fantasy field. Wherever I turn, his name appears, whether I'm reading his introduction to the latest collection of Hodgson's terror-filled yarns of the sea, or flipping through the yellowed pages of an old pulp magazine. I think that Joe Wrzos, who joined in many of the conversations on that summer day, said it best. Only a week after Sam passed away he told me he'd be too busy remembering Sam to miss him. Let those who lament his death take comfort in knowing that he lived a full life and accomplished much. He even managed to outive most of the authors he loved most——H. P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Henry Kuttner and Stanley Weinbaum, to name a few. Members of the E. O. D. particularly should feel fortunate that Sam was in our ranks and shared some of his observations with us over the past couple of years. There are no sullen thoughts here——only indelible memories of a man who both directly and indirectly helped me realize that my own quest in life was to write and to *explore the infinite*.

——*Letter, September 9, 1997.*

CHARLES D. HORNIG

I just can't imagine science-fiction fandom without Sam Moskowitz. I've known him since he first came onto the scene——at once big, blustery, often opinionated, he always seemed to be challenging someone or something. He was a take-charge person——yet always basically friendly. At the same time, I can't forget how he acted as a bouncer to keep the Futurians out of the first World Convention in 1939, people like Donald Wollheim and Fred Pohl.

I gloried in his first book, *The Immortal Storm*, and I got a kick out of how seriously he took fandom. We were mostly a bunch of adolescents, just having fun, neither immortal nor a storm; and I feel he sometimes presented inferences as facts in that work. Yet as a historian I admit he was a genius——he had no peers.

Sam's throat cancer stilled his booming voice, but it never slowed him down. I'll bet that wherever fans go when they die, he's there organizing them——with a restored bellow!

——*Letter, June 16, 1997.*

BENJAMIN P. INDICK

I want here to remember my old comrade and genial opponent. Those who have read my fanzines will recall the long mock-feud Sam Moskowitz and I had over the alleged/actual anti-Semitism of M. P. Shiel, especially as exemplified by his novel *The Lord of the Sea*. The dispute began when each of us explicated his views in long essays printed in the Reynolds Morse Foundation book *Shiel in Diverse Hands* (a title, by the way, that Sam himself suggested). That was in 1983, and thereafter the topic became our friendly battleground. The latest installment in this ever-running argument is in the recent issues of *Ben's Beat* and *Ibid*. These carry my lengthy article on Shiel, reviewing several old and obscure books which, as Ev Bleiler put it, no one else but I would read. The importance of these ancient tomes was that they supported my side of the discussion, one being a French novel by Pierre Benoit, quite philo-Semitic, which Shiel had actually requested the opportunity to translate. I figured I would get a characteristic chuckle out of my friend on this one. And, of course, an argument.

Time has its own answers. Sam never lived to see my article. The last word on the feud must remain a sentence in Bleiler's *Science-Fiction / the Early Years*. It bound us together forever for our varying views: "Some readers, like Sam Moskowitz, have considered it violently anti-Semitic; others, like Ben Indick, have defended the book." I treasure that beyond the considerable pleasure of the book itself.

I had known Sam since the days of ESFA, the Eastern Science Fiction Association, which started meeting in Newark just after the war. He usually presided over these gatherings, which were characterized by his hearty manner and a voice he himself correctly described as "stentorian." It was thanks to Sam and to ESFA that I began a lifelong friendship with David and Celia Keller, one which in their last years would be shared by my children as well. I brought my non-s-f-reading brother to ESFA a few times, and he commiserates with me on the loss of my old friend Sam. Because I lost my own interest in the genre in the early 1950's I drifted away from ESFA meetings. It was many years before I returned, and even more before Sam and I met again. This was in Gerry de la Ree's home, where a few old-timers such as myself——nicknamed "the Old Farts"——got together. Gerry and I had been friends since the early ESFA days, and our friendship had continued. It was a pleasure to resume it now with Sam as if there had been no interruption, and thenceforward we gladly met once a month. Gerry's untimely death in 1993 changed the venue to the house of Stephen Fabian, where Sam and I continued our Shielian jousting, supplemented by occasional (not nearly enough!) telephone calls.

Sam's later life was beset with medical problems, including hypertension and three cancer operations, all of which he accepted stoically and uncomplainingly. Worst of these was that for cancer of the larynx, which left him dependant on an electronic amplifying device for audible speech. He reassured me, however, that using it did not bother his throat. We also compared notes on our prostate cancer operations. He always came through these problems with a broad and cheerful smile, and coped with difficulties without complaint.

Before Sam's passing I had already lost several good friends in the field. Most keenly felt was the death of Gerry de la Ree, with whom I had planned to schmooze away many lingering afternoons during my imminent retirement. It was not to be. The monthly meetings of the Old Farts (now more discreetly named The Reliquarians by our affable younger friend Joe Wrzos) cannot ever be the same. Sam was a giant in so many ways, and his winning smile and innate charm can neither be forgotten nor replaced.

——*Letter, May 3, 1997.*

KENNETH JOSENHANS

First Fandom gets smaller as we all float down the river of time. I do a little arithmetic, and am shocked to realize that when I got into fandom Sam

Moskowitz wasn't even collecting Social Security yet. My impression is that, between them, Sam Moskowitz and Don Wollheim pretty much laid out the basic architecture of science-fiction fandom. And both founders are now gone. Certainly meaning no disrespect, and with a smile, I just have to pass along Harry Warner's gentle dig at *The Immortal Storm*: "If read immediately after a history of World War II, it does not seem like an anticlimax." I read the book, and it's true.

——E-mail to Vincent Clark, April 17, 1997.

ALVIN H. LYBECK

I learned of Sam's death when Sylvester Adessa, an old friend and teenage buddy in Milwaukee, sent me a copy of the *New York Times* obit, and wanted to send you a brief note to express my sympathy and sense of loss. The loss seems especially personal because I've been reading his books and articles for so many years that he seemed almost like family. The field has lost its major source of articles, commentary and correspondence, and as editor of *Fantasy Commentator* you are sadly obliged to add a practical problem to your own personal loss. It would be hard for me to think of anyone in the science-fiction community who will be missed more.

——Letter, May1, 1997.

DOUGLAS ROBILLARD

I can't claim anything like your long friendship with Sam, but I did come to know him pretty well through his contributing to the anthology *American Supernatural Fiction,* which I edited. Of course, I respected and admired him and his work long before we ever made contact——but working with him on his fine David H. Keller essay only made me more conscious of his scholarship, talents and patience. We've lost a great friend, and I have some inkling of how you and others who've been associated with him many years must feel. I hope we can look forward to reading the rest of his "Voyagers Through Eternity" serial.

——Letter, April 16, 1997.

ANDREW I. PORTER

I have this image in my mind of Sam Moskowitz and me striding down the streets of Philadelphia. We'd just spent a long day reading proofs of the November 1967 convention issue of *Quick Frozen Foods* magazine at The Periodical Press. We're headed for the Philcon hotel——was it the Sylvania that year? To SaM (as his name was fannishly spelled) this must have seemed indescribably old hat; he'd been going to Philcons since before they *were* Philcons, back in the late 1930's. But he was just as excited over attending another one as I was, when it was my fourth Philcon.

It was odd working for a fan, and a legendary one at that. What most people forget nowadays is that Sam's voice was loud by nature. He didn't need a microphone to get his point across——he could easily project his words to the rear seats of a large convention hall. So when he was robbed of his natural voice by cancer it was as if the gods had decided to humble him in a weird and perverse way.

Those fans who worked for and with SaM——over the years, John Giunta, Edith Ogutsch, Arnie Katz, John J. Pierce, Ross Chamberlain, myself (and presumably others)——were working with an expert editor, an authority in the frozen food business who was also for decades the biggest name fan around. It was an odd experience. SaM was a great kidder——he'd grab you and not so gently punch you in the kidneys——who could also be all business when that was required.

In later years he became something of an elder statesman, no longer in the mainstream of fandom, increasingly linked to that earlier day when a bunch of

teenaged kids tried to rule the sevagram (or at least decide who could show up at their conventions). I'm happy to say that before Don Wollheim died the two reconciled, agreeing that old differences were just that: old and irrelevant to the people they'd become as elder gods in the fannish pantheon.

SaM's death reminds me that we continue to lose our past. I applaud the efforts of Joe Siclari and others to preserve the pieces of fandom's heritage, but I'm wondering what will happen when we're all reduced to elderly grumps, confined to nursing homes and keeping in touch by e-mail when we can'tafford to hold conventions any more. Recalling my editorial in *Algol* #20, nearly 25 years ago, I think that fandom is like the elvin folk at the end of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, who were either doomed to pass on into the Uttermost West, or stay and dwindle in power until ultimately forgotten. Fandom itself, like everything else, is constantly changing, and the science-fiction community that has existed, waxing and now perhaps waning, is doomed eventuallyto pass into oblivion, a footnote to the history of and the enthusiasm for commercial fiction. It's not a pleasant thought, but I think it's a truthful one.

—*Editorial, Science Fiction Chronicle, June 1997.*

JACK ROBINS

I first met Sam at the World Science Fiction Cenvention inNew York City in the summer of 1939. To explain the circumstances of that meeting, I must go back in time to when an organization called the International Scientific Association——ISA for short——met monthly in the Queens home of William Sykora. Among the members, besides Bill and I, were Donald Wollheim, John B. Michel, Fred Phol, Herb Goodket, George Hahn, Walter Kubilius and a few others. I loved the meetings. They were fun for us teenagers and for the few older fans in their early twenties.

But differences developed between Wollheim and Sykora. These became so bitter that one day Sykora barred everyone from his home and ended the ISA. Because we fans had enjoyed these get-togethers, Wollheim decided toform a new club. It was called the Futurians, and most of the people who had met in Sykora's basement decided to join. We found an organization in Brooklyn that let us meet at their headquarters when they weren't using it.

The Futurians had a left-wing connotation and Sykora, Taurasi, Moskowitz and others considered them to be enemies of Fandom. When Wollheim conceived the notion that it would be nice to have a worldwide gathering of fans in conjunction with the 1939 World's Fair it languished until, under Sam's leadership, the idea came to fruition. Sam had the unique ability to get John W. Campbell and the other science-fiction magazine editors and writers to offer suggestions and help, agree to attend, meet fans, and even speak.

Wollheim, Michel, Pohl, myself and one or two other Futurians climbed up the steps of the rented hall to attend this first science-fiction meeting. The person collecting admission fees at the door wouldn't let us in and called Sam, who rushed over. Sam decided not to admit Wollheim, Michel and Pohl. This is a public meeting, Wollheim argued, and we have the money to pay for admission. Sam said he didn't want any fans there who might disrupt the meeting. Wollheim, Pohl and Michel were forced to leave.

There I was, standing mouth open in shock, awaiting Sam's judgement. He looked at me and thought for a moment. Even though we were supposed to be on opposite sides, I admired Sam from the instant I saw him. He was handsome, broad-shouldered, confident and "alive" in both appearance and action. He seemed to be everywhere at once, and was repeatedly called on to solve problems and make decisions. Sam was in charge, and everyone knew it.

Now he was called upon to decide whether I could attend or not. As he stared at me his face relaxed. "Go ahead," he gestured with a toss of his head.

"Let him in," he instructed the fan collecting admission fees. I don't know what made him admit me. After all, I had come with Wollheim and the others. I was known to be a member of the Futurian club, and he considered the Futurians to be his enemies. Yet he let me in.

Years later, when I met Sam at a science-fiction convention in Manhattan, I told him that if he hadn't had charge of the 1939 convention, even though Wollheim had plugged for it, the event would not have taken place. That was my opinion. Wollheim was good with ideas, but Sam was the kind of person who could get things done. That 1939 convention was Sam's baby all the way through.

From time to time in the years afterward I would meet Sam at conventions and we'd spend a few minutes together. He told me he stopped considering the Futurians enemies after he visited their shared lodging (I wasn't part of the group that lived at that apartment, which they called The Ivory Tower) and found nothing in the refrigerator except some moldy cheese. He realized that the fans living there were virtually starving. Sam felt so sorry for them he just couldn't ever again condemn them.

I recall Sam at the 1990 Philcon, the last one Isaac Asimov attended. He had to touch something on his throat every time he spoke and his voice came out without inflection, like a robot's. I never asked why; I simply accepted him as he was, a warm and interesting person. We spent some minutes together.

The last time I saw him was at a Lunacon meeting. We were talking to Elsie Wollheim, and she told us that Donald had had a stroke and was in a hospital. Sam insisted on visiting Donald even though Elsie warned him that her husband's voice had been affected, and his speech could hardly be understood. But Sam did go, though what transpired between two people whose voices had become impaired I do not know.*

Of the former Futurians, the only ones whom I know are still alive are Fred Pohl, Robert Lowndes and myself. Sam urged me to write about my science-fiction experiences and send them to him for his records. I started but haven't devoted enough time to complete them. Now I don't have Sam to send them to when I finish.

—*ScientiFiction, Autumn 1997.*

JULIUS SCHWARTZ

I think I first met Sam at the Philadelphia Conference of 1937. After that we saw each other at meetings of the Queens chapter of the Science Fiction League. It was during preparations for the 1939 World Convention, however, that we got to know each other well. We often worked together, visiting editors and authors, canvassing for support and getting promises for help. We also lined up advertisements to help pay for the convention booklet which Connie Ruppert printed. Even small contributions were welcome in those depression days—for a quarter, we'd list a fan's name under "Boosters."

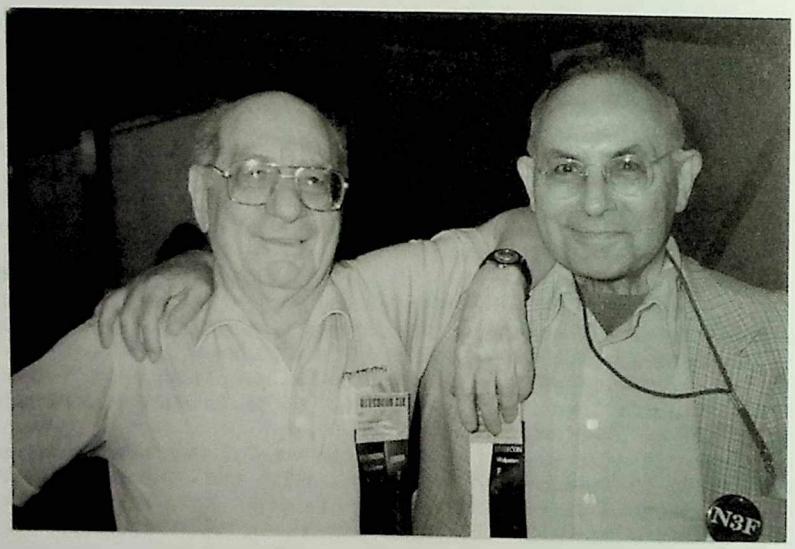
One of my clearest memories of Sam was seeing him at the Fall 1954 convention, where he presented me with an inscribed copy of *The Immortal Storm,* which had just been published in book form. After reading it, I asked him where he'd gotten all that information about me. "From fan magazines," he replied. And I said, "Don't you *ever* write anything about me without calling me to verify what you're saying!" "Didn't I get the facts right?" he protested. I said he had, but I just liked to see things first to be sure.

Over the years we kept in touch on the phone. We also saw each other at conventions. Sam was brought up in a poor family, and I noticed that thrifty habits he'd acquired then stayed with him all his life. He'd always patronize the less expensive restaurants and hotels, even though in his later years he could easily afford better ones. But he wasn't cheap. He'd never hesitate to pick up

*This meeting has been described in *Fantasy Commentator VII*, 72-73 (1990).—*ed.*

Left: Julius and Jackie Schwarz at the 1961 Worldcon

Below: Julius Schwartz and Sam Moskowitz at Rivercon XIX



a luncheon tab, for example. He was generous to others, and frugal mostly toward himself.

We played a little game that I'm going to miss. I used to tease him by saying, "Sam, the next time I see you, I'm going to tell you something about science-fiction that you never knew!" That would get his attention, for he always was eager for new information. To him, science-fiction was the most important thing in the world. ——*Telephone conversation, May 4, 1997.*

JOHN B. SPEER

You know his nicknames: The Newark Neanderthal and Foghorn Samuel. His first fanzine writings tended to be sentimentally reminiscent pieces, and he became something of a hack writer along these lines. He displayed no great modesty. Then he became involved in a feud with the Wollheim faction that helped shape the future of fandom, and with Sykora and Taurasi put on the first Worldcon.

SaM had great stores of energy and a dominating personality. He was the most active member of the Worldcon Triumvirate, though he had the least part in the Exclusion Act, which barred Wollheim and four other leading Futurians from the 1939 convention. He obviously read much, but said his handicap was poor eyesight. Until near the end of the war, that kept him out of the army.

During the war he discovered a new purpose, compiling an exhaustive history of science-fiction fandom. Through researching its history before his time, be brought to light major aspects which I overlooked, and thus did not include in my own shorter work, *Up to Now*.

His biographical material on science-fiction writers, such as that collected in *Seekers of Tomorrow*, is valuable source information. Vital statistics like the date and place of birth, family, education, occupation, etc., may seem of elementary importance but often are hard to come by, and they can be useful in understanding a person.

I hope that other articles about SaM will reveal some of these statistics about him that are little known. I know he was a Levite, and that his family was poor, because he told me. During minority his fan activity was sometimes limited by poverty, notably during the late 1930's.

After the war he was a sort of elder statesman to the group of bright young fans who centered around northern New Jersey. For a while he was a traveling salesman, and by chance met Estes Kefauver and Governor Earl Long. He then, fortunately, got into the publishing side of frozen foods, a growing field. Mundane though that was, it provided the money he used to acquire a great collection of fantasy fiction and related material. He felt that this was an advantageous tradeoff.

In person he was sometimes tedious. Speaking of pre-Cambrian s-f, after the preface "What would you say if——", he described many s-f plots before revealing that these were embodied in nineteenth century newspaper hoax stories. And at a panel discussion in Oklahoma City about First Fandom, I said, "But back to First Fandom" after he'd gone into a detailed account of how he had found an s-f collection in Wales.

I saw SaM only at wide intervals. During some of these he matured. Once he said to me, justly, "Jack, you're speaking to me as if I were still just the kid you used to know." But our friendship persisted. ——*Letter, June 20, 1997.*

PAUL SPENCER

Sam Moskowitz lives in my memory as a burly, emphatic giant, a sort of genial King Kong of science-fiction fandom. He was a part of my experience in the field for several decades; however, my contact with him was intermittent, and I

never got to know him with any intimacy. Hence I recall him in a series of brief, disconnected episodes——and yet he still looms as one of the most vivid and impressive persons I've ever known.

My memories start just after the war with Sam in his role as master of ceremonies at the Eastern Science Fiction Association in Newark. As such, he brought about one of the most important contacts of my life——and perhaps, to a lesser degree, of Sam's: that with the guest speaker at the February 6, 1947 meeting, Dr. David H. Keller. Certainly Sam played a major role in that author's life.

From 1938 through about 1942, Keller had been one of the most admired contemporary writers of science-fiction, fantasy and horror; but his service in the army Medical Corps during World War II had removed him from the scene, and postwar publishers had shown no interest in his work. Sam, well aware of Keller's inportance in the field's history, took it upon himself to rescue the man from oblivion. First he wrote "By the Waters of Lethe, or The Forgotten Man of Science Fiction," an article published in the December 1945 issue of James Taurasi's fanzine *Fantasy Times*. He followed this by having Keller as the ESFA's guest speaker. Then, with Will Sykora, he compiled and published *Life Everlasting and Other Tales of Science, Fantasy and Horror*, an anthology for which he also wrote a lengthy introduction. Distributed with the book was a checklist of the author's fiction.

As a result of my meeting Keller, I was enabled to produce, under sponsorship of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, the first American edition of his novel *The Sign of The Burning Hart*, previously published only in France. (Both editions are now rare collector's items.) That in turn led to a literary and personal relationship between us that lasted until Keller's death in 1966. Sam's efforts had meanwhile led to a substantial Keller revival, as his stories, articles and books began appearing regularly. That he was grateful for this is shown by the dedication in *The Solitary Hunters and The Abyss*: "To Sam Moskowitz, My Inspirator."

Alas, in time a dispute over how this revival should best be promoted led to a falling-out between Sam and Keller; I have the impression that neither ever quite forgave the other. Yet despite any resentment he had against Keller the man, Sam resisted letting it affect his regard for Keller the author. This is shown, for example, by one of his last published writings, "The Struggle to Create Beauty from the Horrors of Reality: David H. Keller's Fantasy Stories," which appeared last year in Douglas Robillard's *American Supernatural Fiction*.

A peculiar offshoot of the Moskowitz-Keller-Spencer connection involved an unfinished Keller story, "The Prophet." This was among a number of unpublished manuscripts I obtained from Keller, and I thought I saw a way to complete it. I did so, imitating the author's style, and sent copies to him and to Sam. Keller authorized me to try to sell it as a collaboration, but no response came from Sam. At an ESFA meeting months later I met Robert A.W. Lowndes, editor of several magazines. He informed me that Sam had sent him the manuscript, and that he was interested in buying it. Although this anecdote does not have a happy ending (Bob Lowndes's magazines were discontinued before the story could see print), I remember it as an example of Sam's kindness; he spontaneously acted as an agent out of friendship and sought no profit for himself.

It was at an ESFA meeting, too, that I met another legendary figure from science-fiction's early days, the pioneering publisher Hugo Gernsback. He was a dapper and approachable person with whom I had an interesting chat. That incident was followed by the revelation that he was returning to genre publishing and had hired Sam to edit his new magazine, *Science Fiction +*. This was to have a lavish format and to reflect Gernsback's old enthusiasm and bold approach. But in the beginning (as Sam later told me) "The Father of Science Fiction" kept tight control over the material the magazine published; consequently, many of the stories in the first couple of issues were disappointing throwbacks to an earlier era. Then, however, Sam was given much greater freedom, and the contents quickly re-

flected his knowledge of both the earlier and the contemporary scene, as well as his own good taste and judgement. Sadly, as he strengthened the magazine Gernsback apparently became dissatisfied with the income it brought, and the seventh issue became the last. This was a severe blow to me on two counts: I was quite fond of *Science Fiction +*, and shortly before its demise Sam, knowing of my editorial work with another publisher, had offered me a freelance job on its staff as a proofreader.

I learned from him afterwards an intriguing sidelight on the magazine's last days. When Gernsback decided to discontinue it, there was another publisher who was eager to take the magazine over. The prospective new owner not only told Sam he could stay on as editor, but actually showed him the office where he would be working! Then somehow the deal fell through. It is to weep. . . .

Another vivid memory is the Moskowitz-Spencer duel in the letter column of one of the science-fiction magazines. When some favorable comment was printed regarding M. P. Shiel's novel *The Lord of the Sea*, Sam wrote a letter excoriating the book as blatantly anti-Semitic. I, a Shiel enthusiast, replied with a list of what seemed to me to be passages that not only cancelled what he had objected to, but even made the work seem strongly pro-Jewish. In Sam's response, he refused to budge from his position. I believe I attempted another rebuttal, but at that point the magazine's editor said "Enough!" and the debate was terminated. What impressed me most about the incident was how typically it illustrated three of Sam's characteristics: his broad knowledge of the genre, obviously based on extensive research; the tenacity with which he held his opinions; and the good will he continued to show me, the staunch defender of a man whose apparent bigotry he despised.

Another incident which showed a mafor Moskowitz quality occurred at a science-gathering where the long-time author Edmond Hamilton was to receive an award. Sam presided, and introduced Hamilton. But instead of explaining the grounds for the award in just a few sentences, he delivered, to the audience's obvious astonishment, what amounted to a lecture on all aspects of the author's surprisingly varied s-f career over several decades. This was embellished with references to many specific stories, areas where Hamilton had pioneered, and authors and trends he had influenced. I'm not sure whether this comprehensive and fascinating talk was taped and/or published, but it should have been, as a typically important example of Moskowitzian scholarship.

Another example that impressed me, as it must have many others, was the fortitude and skill with which Sam adapted to the loss of his rich speaking voice. There was nothing apologetic or self-conscious in the way he used his electronic amplifier, which produced a grating, artificial voice, nor any diminution of his enthusiasm for whatever he was doing. There's a special poignancy in this, because when, some time in the 1980's, he invited me to give a talk on Keller to the ESFA, I found at the meeting that he was speaking without mechanical help, and much of his voice's former resonance had returned. That was the last time I saw him; but around a year ago he phoned me——and his voice was again that of a raspy robot. Yet despite this relapse the warmth and assurance of his personality were still there.

Finally, a wisp of remembrance that epitomizes a couple of Sam's striking attributes. At some convention or club meeting he was telling me about a new fact he had unearthed in connection with the history of science-fiction. Having stated it, he grabbed me——vocally if not physically, stared into my eyes and declared, "That's important!" Now, over his lifetime Sam's activities took many forms——truck driver, author, editor, expert on frozen foods and, he once mentioned, even dog-breeder. But it was of matters science-fictional that, with characteristic forcefulness, he declared——and I'm sure deeply believed——"That's important!"

——*September 25, 1997.*

HARRY WARNER, JR.

There isn't a great deal I can recall about Sam that others who knew him better can't describe in more ways and more detail. We saw one another at several conventions back in the 1960's and 1970's. But during those years he was rather peeved at me because I hadn't been completely complimentary about *The Immortal Storm* in a fanzine article and later in my own book, *All Our Yesterdays*. Somehow Sam acquired the belief that my opinion was prejudiced because I was a member of that world-famous and perilous organization, The Futurian Federation of the World. A few years later I included this in my listing in *Who's Who in the East*. I don't know if Sam ever realized that his reminder to me was indirectly responsible for what must be the first and last time this Futurian organization ever got mentioned in a mundane book. However, he eventually wrote, suggesting that we make peace with one another, something I couldn't do exactly as he wished because I had been in complete peace with him all along; but I agreed anyway and we got along fine from then on.

Sam was very helpful to me during my early fandom years, contributing items to my first fanzine, *Spaceways*, answering my letters, and giving me lots of editorial ideas via his own excellent fanzine, *Helios*. He published half a dozen good-sized issues of this in 1937-1938. Alas, nobody but me seems to remember it now. Since it was hektographed, it may survive today only in badly faded form.

One thing I hope devoutly: that some arrangements can be made to preserve Sam's correspondence files. He must have saved everything from his neofan days, and it was all neatly filed away. I know, because he resurrected a postal card I'd sent him during my teens. Very few large collections of correspondence dating from the first decades of fandom can exist, and this one should surely be preserved as an example of fannish contact before it was possible to communicate mostly by face-to-face encounters. It probably contains many facts about those days that never found their way into Sam's published writings.

—*Letter, May 14, 1997.*

JOSEPH WRZOS

I first met Sam Moskowitz in the late 1940's, when I was still only a teenager just beginning college, and he was an ambitious truck driver not yet out of his twenties who'd missed out on higher education due to hard times inflicted by the Great Depression. But, as I soon learned, he had by then long since made up for his lack of advanced formal training——an alleged limitation which a few disaffected critics and rivals later sniped at. He seemed to me then to know more about my favorite subject, science-fiction, than all of my professors combined; and looking back now, I'm sure he did.

That encounter took place at a special extended meeting of the recently formed Eastern Science Fiction Association, held one sunny Sunday afternoon in Newark's Slovak Sokol Hall. This was a small, crowded, dimly-lit upstairs room, generally used for local union meetings, into which muffled sounds of festive merriment occasionally burst forth from the beer hall below. But no one seemed to mind a bit. Least of all the tall, dark, somewhat stentorian and knowledgable young man emceeing the program——for the ESFA was almost exclusively Sam's creation. He was too busy introducing guest speakers, calling attention to science-fiction luminaries and prominent fans in the audience, and welcoming the rest of us (such as myself) who had just wandered in off the street. This, it should be remembered, was in the old admission-free times, long before such comfy gatherings escalated into the huckstering gigaevents of today with their high entrance fees.

I had a whale of a time, one I swore to myself I'd never forget, though about all I can now recall of it is managing to say a few words to a stocky-looking Manly Wade Wellman (I praised his "John Thunstone" stories, then running in

Weird Tales), meeting Alex Osheroff (a devoted fan also no longer with us), and that Alex promptly whirled around and introduced me to Sam, who was just then stepping off the podium.

Close up, the director of the ESFA proved to be friendly, unassuming and quick-witted; he was also quite clearly the most dedicated science-fiction enthusiast in the room. That was enough for me to like him right from the start. At the time, of course, I had no idea that he was much more than he seemed——but I gradually learned. By this time in his life Sam was not only a prolific fan writer, the author of scores of articles and reviews, but had edited and published his own fanzines as well. Even more impressive, he'd been a part-time literary agent for professional science-fiction authors, and was himself a published writer who had sold stories to such genre magazines as F. Orlin Tremaine's *Comet* ("The Way Back") and Malcolm Reiss's *Planet Stories* ("World of Mockery" and "Man of the Stars"). All this, astonishingly, he had accomplished in his spare moments while busy earning a living in a full-time job.

Thereafter, as the years went by, I would see Sam quite often, usually at his home in Newark——this was before his marriage, and he was then still living with his parents. Occasionally a few other fans would show up, and we'd all talk shop until the wee hours. It wasn't always about science-fiction, for the diversity of our interests, including Sam's, tended to be eclectic; but science-fiction remained our main topic.

What I now remember best about these Saturday night sessions were the times when Sam would try out various new ideas on us——sometimes speculating on the nature of science-fiction itself, at others raising the possibility that important pre-pulp stories might still lie "out there somewhere," most likely buried in the newspapers or slick magazines of the previous century. Systematic excavation and study in those areas could bring about some startling revisions in the narrower perception of the genre and its origins that prevailed at that time. As befitted a careful researcher, he propounded such views only tentatively, preferring to wait until he had more data and reserving final judgement.

Sam's early research——I now see clearly——took him over paths which decades later other scholars in the field have had to follow, whether or not some of them are willing to acknowledge it. His discoveries are now preserved in such ground-breaking works as *Science Fiction by Gaslight* (1968), which tracks the genre through periodicals of a century ago; *The Crystal Man* (1973), which describes the forgotten seminal contributions to fantasy of Edward Page Mitchell; and *Science-Fiction in Old San Francisco* (1980), where he reveals the existence of an entire school of nineteenth century writers in the field never before noted. These, as well as other books, have been instrumental in reshaping the face of science-fiction studies and in widening, almost unbelievably, our present understanding of the genre's parameters.

All of this——Sam's lifetime of dedication to science-fiction, his years as a leading fan, professional editor and innovative historian——I was fortunate enough, as one of his confidants, to observe from a front-row seat. Only now that he is no longer with us, however, am I beginning to appreciate the depth and the breadth of his influence, not only on myself but on all of his close friends in the field. And I'm also beginning to understand something else significant about Sam: sheepskin or not, he was probably the best college professor I ever had.

 ——*August 26, 1997.*

Editor's note: I am indebted to John L. Coker III and Dr. Christine Haycock for the photographs on page 94; to Eric Leif Davin for those on page 86; to Steve Sneyd for copies of the John Clute and Kenneth Josenhans pieces; and to Joseph Wrzos for putting me in touch with Paul Spencer. The letters of Vincent Clarke and Perry Grayson appeared in slightly different from in, respectively, *Trap Door* #18 and *Yawning Vortex* for July/August 1997.

Day of the Pulps

Leslie F. Stone

Editor's note: Leslie F. Stone is the nom de plume of Leslie Frances (Rubenstein) Silberberg (1905-1987), who wrote regularly in the 1930's for the fantasy pulps. By count she was actually the fifth woman science-fiction writer to appear there, being preceded only by Francis Stevens, Clare Winger Harris, L. Taylor Hansen and Lilith Lorraine. What follows below is an adaptation of Ms. Stone's speech at the Balticon, a convention which was held on March 28-30, 1974 under the sponsorship of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society. In it she relates her experiences in what two generations ago seemed to her a predominately male-oriented field.

I am certain that a majority of those present here today are unaware of the long-ago weird mystery series that used to bring us all into a weekly huddle around our radios, "Inner Sanctum." It began with the opening of a creeekkking door and the m. c.——Orson Welles, I believe——saying, "I am a woman 106 years old." Well, I'm not 106, and won't be for many years to come, but it was almost half a century ago, in 1929, that my first story was printed in *Amazing Stories*.

I cannot claim myself as the pioneer s-f woman author, since Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley beat me to it in 1818 with *Frankenstein*, but I do happen to be one of the first women writers in the fantasy pulps. Altogether I wrote twenty novels, novelettes and short stories that were published in *Amazing, Air Wonder, Astounding, Future Fiction, Wonder Stories* and *Weird Tales*. I had some rejections, of course, and three acceptances never saw print because themagazines either died or were sold to another company, and home the manuscripts came. One was a sequel that had been specifically requested, so no other magazine wished to print it, and what happened to the others I can't recall.

When Hugo Gernsback left *Amazing Stories* to establish the Stellar Publishing Corporation he took along two of my stories, "Men with Wings" and "When the Sun Went Out." That's why "Men with Wings,"which is actually the second story I wrote, was published first in the July 1929 *Air Wonder Stories*, while my first one, "Out of the Void," appeared in *Amazing* a month later.

A number of my stories were reprinted in later years in other magazines and anthologies. Most recently Dr. Isaac Asimov used "The Human Pets of Mars" in his autobiographical anthology *Before the Golden Age*, and was nice enough to say that it had led him into writing science-fiction. Two of my tales were pirated by the Mexican magazine *Los Cuentos Fantasticos* and never paid for, as were those of other fantasy writers——Mexico doesn't have reciprocal copyright laws.

Some people think of early science-fiction as primitive, but a lot of it was fresh and new in this young medium; stories hadn't yet become just hackneyed rehashings of tired, old plots. I was even able to come up with a few "firsts" in my own writings. "Out of the Void" put the first woman astronaut into space, and the main character in "The Fall of Mercury" was a black——the first one, I think, to become the hero of an s-f story. "The Conquest of Gola" was written from the viewpoint of an alien civilization, in this case a matriarchy, that defeated the Earthmen. And did I get a berating from readers for putting females in the driver's seat, females that dared to regard their gentle consorts as playthings! Male chauvenism just couldn't take that!

When I was about to submit my first story, as a matter of fact, a friend advised me that a woman writer in this field would probably be unacceptable, not only to an editor or two, but also to some readers. Now, at that time my first

name had decidedly masculine connotations (it didn't come into popular usage for women until much later), so by using just a middle initial I put myself on the masculine side of the ledger and thus "passed." Back then, Women's Lib was but a gleam in feminine eyes.

On his discovery of my gender, Hugo Gernsback accepted it quite amiably. In fact, I'm sure he liked the idea of a woman invading the field he had opened. Nor did T. O'Conor Sloane, dear man, have any qualms about women writers in his stable when he took over the *Amazing Stories* editorship, never turning down any story I submitted.

Actually the dire prediction that editors would turn me off because of my sex did not arise until 1938. In 1937 Orlin Tremaine, then editor of *Astounding*, bought "The Great Ones," which was published in the July 1937 issue. Some time after that he left the editor's chair and John W. Campbell, Jr. took over. Inasmuch as I had submitted a second story to Mr. Tremaine and wished to meet the new editor, I phoned one day for an appointment with him. On his desk when I arrived lay my manuscript, and you can imagine my feelings when, with no more than a how-dy-do, Mr. Campbell said in a rather acid tone, "I am returning your story, Miss Stone. I do not believe that women are capable of writing science-fiction——nor do I approve of it!" I grabbed my story from his hand and fled. Later he did reverse this policy, but naturally I never submitted anything else to him. That story, "Death Dallies Awhile," was later published in *Weird Tales*.

Horace Gold, then editor of *Galaxy*, likewise proved to be a male chauvinist. On one of his rejection slips to me——and I understand he was well known for writing nasty rejection slips——he had scribbled, "Why not face up to it? Women do not belong in science-fiction!"

My third sexist experience, story-wise, came at the hands of Groff Conklin, who had chosen to include my "Conquest of Gola" in his 1946 anthology, *The Best of Science Fiction*. My husband Bill, a newspaper man, happened to attend a cocktail party given for Mr. Conklin to mark the publication of this book. On meeting him, my husband said rather modestly, "My wife writes science-fiction." "Oh, she does," replied Conklin. "What is her name?" "Leslie F. Stone," said Bill. Well, the man's chin almost dropped to the floor. "Are you telling me I used a story written by a woman in my book? I didn't believe women could write science fiction!"

LESLIE STONE

Other women were coming into the field, using either their initials or masculine first names——C. L. Moore, Andre Norton, Leigh Brackett and others——but not being in touch with them I don't know if any sexist experiences befell them. Certainly Donald Wollheim didn't object to women writers, since he used my story "The Rape of the Solar System" in his 1950 collection, *Flight into Space*, nor did Dr. Asimov later on.

I have been asked quite often why I began to write science-fiction. My answer is simply that I enjoy it. Writing gives me a creative outlet for my rather vivid imagination. I write for the sheer pleasure of it, and because I must——an idea bubbles up inside, and I hear my characters talking to me.

I was about nine when I started——first, a rambling tale about a lost dog

(our own) with which I filled copy-book after copy-book, not knowing when to stop. Then a series of children's fairy stories. These actually got published in a local Petersburg, Virginia newspaper and I was launched——a professional getting paid for what I wrote! After that I wrote fiction for my high school magazine.

Argosy magazine was publishing what it called "different stories" about that time (this was before Hugo Gernsback coined the term "science-fiction"), and I discovered Edgar Rice Burroughs, notably *A Princess of Mars*. I was enthralled by the Princess, and could barely await each new sequel. At about eighteen I began toying with the idea of writing some science-fiction myself. This led, a few years later, to "Out of the Void." It was accepted by Gernsback in six weeks——although I must say he took much longer than that to pay me for it. He had the penchant for late payment!

During the Great Depression, probably late in 1932, I conceived an idea for a comic strip. It was frankly inspired by Buck Rogers, and called "Ken Burton, Time-Traveller." The first episodes were to deal with adventures among the dinosaurs in the Jurassic Period. I found an excellent artist, an agent who believed I had a very good idea and story-line, and he submitted it to a newspaper syndicate. A pilot script was sent to a large newspaper publisher for approval. Three or four months went by before I was told that the script had been turned down.

Now, by what I hope is coincidence within the next few months a new comic strip appeared in the papers about an ape man and his pet dinasaur, and within a year there was another featuring a flashy character who wrestled and fought dinasaurs.* Odd, wasn't it? But in all fairness I must concede these could have been on the drawing boards when mine was submitted. I'm not the only one who dreamed along the lines of Buck Rogers.

My agent sought to sell my script to several other syndicates, and even individual newspapers, but no one was willing to handle it. Money was very tight then, and developing a new strip for the market would cost too much. He also submitted it to several radio networks, but they were not yet ready for this kind of way-out thing. Rod Sterling and "Star Trek" were yet to come. We also tried to place a script illustrating simplified astronomical facts, with the same results. So my fancy of writing a comic strip all my own went down the drain.

I've also been asked if I have anecdotal lore on the "big names" of my day. I was then living in Washington, D. C., and I met no science-fiction writers there. In fact, meeting fellow authors was coincidental, and occurred in New York editorial offices——if it occurred at all. Oh, there were many writers in Washington, but not of s-f; and when I mentioned I wrote science-fiction to any I met they simply looked down their noses at me.

My husband was proud of me, but being a newspaper man wanting "only the facts, ma'm," he looked upon my fiction as merely escapist literature, as indeed most people considered it in those days. My two sons read my stories——with an "if I must, I must!"——but neither ever became s-f fans.

In 1945, with the horrifying use of nuclear weapons, along with development of various scientific devices that the war had brought into reality——devices we writers had lightly touched upon——I felt the future was upon us and that my own well had run dry. I now had a husband, growing sons to raise and a garden to fill the gap.

But a few years ago there came to me again a strong urge to write, and I found I had to learn how all over again, for a new style had been overtaking science-fiction. This wasn't easy for someone who had arrived in the wake of Edgar Rice Burroughs, when adventure was presented for the sake of adventure on other worlds and our own. As a sort of tryout I revised "Out of the Void" to have it published as a book in 1967; it was reprinted in England in 1972.

**These were "Alley Oop" (begun 1933) and "Flash Gordon" (begun 1934).* ——Editor.

Sometimes I've come upon novels in the field so *avant-garde* that I found them confusing. More often than not I tossed them aside as unreadable before I was half-way through them. This made me write a leading literary agency to inquire exactly what they felt constituted modern science-fiction. "Some authors are experimenting with the 'shattered' plot structure," I was told. "One jumps radically from time-period to time-period and lets the reader advance to the middle of the book before he realizes that he is seeing the central character at different periods of life. Such experiments, of course, take the chance also of shattering the reader's sense of coherence regarding the material and should only be attempted when the author feels fully confident of his skills, and, moreover, has established a loyal readership who will go along with the experiment." I said to myself, "Huuuh?" and went on doing what I was doing, building my characters psychologically, putting them into drastic situations in the new environments I had created, and extracting them realistically——just as I'd always striven to do.

I am not a scientist. In fact, some of the science in my stories was——well, pretty wild! For example, in "Men with Wings" I had a so-called scientist in the fifteenth century blithely endeavoring, by the use of serums and elixirs made from the glands of birds, to grow wings on human beings——and succeeding! It didn't matter to me whether an ordinary heavy-boned man would truly be capable of, say, carrying a full-grown woman aloft and bearing her easily from a ship at sea hundreds of miles through the air to the nesting place of the flying people in a remote rain-forest. And scientist though he was, Hugo Gernsback did not take exception to this. Nor did the readers. Whenever I reflect on this now, however, I get a little shudder! Over the years I've made a few other booboos but never again one as bad as that. I'm somewhat more careful in my scientific background these days.

Another topic I've been asked about is the interrelationships between editors and writers in my time. Was I told what to write? Was censorship a big problem? Did you have to adhere rigidly to a formula? For the most part, my own relationships with editors were congenial and not very demanding. I was never asked to change a story. As for formula, I think acceptability of the story as a whole was the chief criterion. There were limititations, of course; sex and four-letter words were definitely taboo.

Could one make a living at it? I feel pretty certain that in the early days of the fantasy pulps no one really did. Even today I believe this is true, unless a writer happens not only to be very prolific but among the very top-flight authors. Being a slow writer myself, I'm a poor example. According to my records, Mr. Gernsback started me at a quarter of a cent a word in 1929. In 1930 my rate was upped to half a cent, and by 1940 it had become a full penny. My largest check for a single story was $400 for "Across the Void," my longest one. From a total of twenty stories I find my take——and that includes what I received for reprintings——comes to a not-very-grand total of $1872. That works out to approximately $180 annually for eleven years of writing. Not exactly a living wage!

With the exception of three women writers, I have cited no others in the fantasy field. But I have read and enjoyed the work of many, authors who are surely still familiar to readers of science-fiction today: A. Merritt, S.P. Meek, David H. Keller, Stanley G. Weinbaum, Ralph Milne Farley, John Taine, Clark Ashton Smith, Stanton G. Coblentz and H. P. Lovecraft, to name a few. There are many other beloved writers whom I could mention.

As for the present, I am writing a novel on holography. Before beginning this, to be sure I understood this new, exotic science, I went to the Moore School of Engineering in Philadelphia for a demonstration and briefing.

I also have written two novels which are out with the publishers, so I am a lady-in-waiting, waiting for that famous crrreeeking door to open for me.

Voila! Thus my story is told!

(concluded on page 152)

BANISHED FROM EDEN

Women in Science Fiction

ANITA ALVERIO

Like an archangel, Donald Wollheim stood at the top of the New York City fire escape, his eyes flaming swords watching the couple slink away. The scene as recounted by Philip Klass at the March, 1990 PARSEC meeting, was the 1930s home/headquarters of the Futurians fan club. Mary Byers was the unwelcome interloper, having fled her home in the Midwest to join fellow SF fan and sweetheart, Cyril Kornbluth. But the Futurians' home was for serious, that is male, members only. So Mary and Cyril, a science fictional Adam and Eve, were banished from that garden of innocence.

Today, guardians of SF are not wielding burning swords to keep women out. Instead, a casual observer might even say there's a wide-open gate into that garden. Any bookstore's Science Fiction section displays large numbers of titles by women authors — even if those titles are, as an old SFer reminds me, "not really SF" but dragons and "fairy stuff". And a glance thru the last decade of *SF Chronicle* or *Locus* or *Fantasy Review* (may it rest in peace shows that women are not uncommon writers in the field.

Indeed, Tom Staicar in the **Feminine Eye: Science Fiction and the Women Who Write It** (Unger, NY 1982) says, "Women now constitute a major portion of both [the reading audience and contents pages of SF magazines.] In several ballotings for the Hugo and Nebula awards, women outnumbered men."

But the archangel's shadow appears in recent writing such as the **New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction**, edited by James Gunn (Viking, NY 1988). Its section, "Women," explains: "Science Fiction traditionally has been considered a literature for men and boys: men wrote it and boys read it. The truth behind this tradition can be verified over most of the history of SF by inspecting any table of contents or readership survey. It would not make any sense to have an entry in an SF encyclopedia about men, but the topic of women and SF is worth considering."

In the old days it was argued that women weren't reading SF and furthermore, women weren't writing it (and if they were, men weren't reading what they wrote). Today, women unarguably have the numbers game sewn up but are still a novelty, so a ghettoized section of the encyclopedia must be devoted to them, rather than integrating women in to the entire spectrum and noting how their influence affected the direction of the field.

For instance, in tracing the attitudes of the SF readership and field as a whole, the article on "Women" arrives at the fact that "The 1970s brought about the full flowering of many female talents, several of them affected by the issues the women's movement was raising." Did the field not change because of that?

In his preface to **Twentieth Century Science Fiction Writers**, Curtis C. Smith maintains that women in the 1960s and later "have brought speculation about the future of sex roles to science fiction." Yes, and...?

William Sims Bainbridge surveyed women writers in 1979-80 for the "Women in Science Fiction" chapter of his **Dimensions of Science Fiction** (Harvard U, Cambridge 1986), and said: "The continuing influx of women into science fiction may not promote engineering and the psysical sciences among women, because the female authors express very different values in the fiction, urging social activism rather than technical competence."

As my old SF buddy tells me, "See? Ain't gonna get no NASA or rocket scientists outa today's women's stories like you did in the old days with sense-of-wonder writing." But, doesn't that just mean that the SF field is changing in certain fundamental ways because of the influx of women?

In the 70s, replying to a complaint about the lack of women in SF in *Vertex*, Poul Anderson claimed that "Women have not been relevant." That flip assessment, unfortunately, is still with us today.

The encyclopedia notes that today there is, "the sudden, striking popularity of a kind of SF and a group of talented writers perhaps unfairly lumped together under the term cyberpunks. This diverse and inventive band share a streetwise sensibility, a fascination with computers and technology of all kinds, a clean, forceful 'tough guy' style, and a taste for bizarre future extrapolations; they also have in common the fact that, except for the witty writer Pat Cadigan, they are all male."

In "the golden days" of SF, as my buddy calls them, the garden gate was slammed shut in the face of women: any perusal of table of contents of the magazines tells you that...except that some of those male names (or initials or androgynous names) were really

female writers. In **Before the Golden Age,** Isaac Asimov said that he was turned onto the field of SF by a story written by Leslie F. Stone — who just happened to be a woman. Forrest J. Ackerman (in *Fantasy Book*, August 1983) reminds us that Morgan Wire (also known as Amelia Reynolds Long) kept 30s readers not only laughing but holding onto their seats with her *Weird Tales* stories (one became the movie "I Lend Without a Face"). Her writing was still considered good enough for him to resurrect in his 1982 Bantam anthology **Gosh! Wow! Sense of Wonder Science Fiction.** Leigh Brackett was editor of *Planet Stories* in the early 1940s. In addition to her own writing, she gave encouragement and coaching to young authors such as Ray Bradbury, to whom she entrusted a story she started but had to abandon for another commitment. This story was published in 1944 as "Loreli of the Red Mist."

"The view of science fiction as a male preserve," said Susan Wood in ALGOL/WINTER 1978-79, "is a stereotype fostered by people such as John W. Campbell who tended to address his readers as 'Gentlemen' and his authors as 'the guys.' ... Women have always read SF — like Naomi D. Shimmer of Russell, Kansas who responded to the first issue of *Science Fiction* in 1939 with a letter saying she, and her four sisters 'read Science Fiction to help us picture what the world will be in years to come, or to get someone's idea of life in a different world...If you have to have a female in the picture, make her sensible.' The editor, Charles Hornig, replied: 'I have received so many letters from women who read science-fiction, just lately, that I must confess many of the fair sex have well-developed imaginations. Their group has grown to such proportions that they must certainly be taken into consideration by the male adherents.'"

But Campbell wasn't the first to stereotype women. In 1929, Hugo Gernsback, the father of magazine science fiction, said that "as a rule, women do not make good scienti-fiction writers, because their education and general tendencies in scientific matters are usually limited." (Jane Donaworth in *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 17, 1990) Four years later, however, in 1933, Gernsback's editor, David Lasser, prefaced "Into the 28th Century", a story of a feminist utopia written by a woman, "It speaks well of the times in which we are living when women authors such as Lilith Lorraine have the vision to take science fiction seriously enough to make extended studies of it."

The stereotypic ban on women writers was felt as late as 1965 when Lilith Lorraine (pen name for Mary Maud Wright) explained in an interview that three of her pen names were masculine because "If the editors and publishers know I was a woman they wouldn't accept more than half what they do now." (Donaworth)

As we know, she was not alone. Beginning in 1968, Alice Bradley Sheldon hid for almost a decade behind the male pseudonym 'James Tiptree, Jr.' because "A male name seemed like a good camouflage. I had the feeling that a man would slip by less observed...(and) I suppose I couldn't have avoided having the thought — although I don't remember it — that the editor would take my stories more seriously." (**Feminism and Science Fiction** by Sarah Lefanu, Indiana U 1989)

Since the **Trillion Year Spree**, when Brian Aldiss and David Wingrove placed the real beginnings of Science Fiction with **Frankenstien** (1918) Mary Wollestonecraft Shelley has been accepted as the foremother of the field. Yet in 1977, the very genius of her work was being questioned: "All Mrs. Shelley did," writes Mario Praz, "Was to provide a passive reflection of some of the wild fantasies which were living in the air around her." (from **Literary Women** by Ellen Moers as quoted in Joanna Russ's **How to Suppress Women's Writing**, U Texas 1983) Yet, is H.G. Wells also seen as a passive conduit for his stories, which originated elsewhere than in his brain?

Alice Sheldon observed that, "Men have so preempted the area of human experience that when you write about universal motives you are assumed to be writing like a man." And, I would continue, when you make it clear you are writing of woman's experience in the world, you become irrelevant.

Pamela Sargent gave us three anthologies in the 70s raising SF fans' consciousness to the undeniable fact that women have always been writing in the field. There are so many other collections and reprints which also further prove the existence of women in the field. Yet, the SF **Encyclopedia** can note in speaking of cyberpunk, that "Science fiction has always reflected the culture at large; in this age of increasing militarization, macho posturing and second thought about the possibility or desirability of truly egalitarian societies, it is perhaps not surprising — although it is disheartening — that a largely male-dominated new form of SF that has all the infatuation with technology characteristic of much past work is being hailed as the forerunner of the future of SF."

So the future's in our hands — does the gate of SF slam shut once again on women and women's experience or will SF at long last welcome the women who have been a part of it from the beginning — and are still with it — and finally acknowledge that SF would not be what it is today without their contribution? Once SF, the supposed "literature of ideas," breaks its own chain of biased and gender-prejudiced thinking and ceases to ghettoize women authors and fans as merely an "auxiliary" to the big boys who write "real" SF, then and then only will SF at last begin to fulfill its promise as the literature of the future.

Simply Staggering

A CONVERSATION WITH STEVE SNEYD

H. R. Felgenhauer

Readers have been encountering Steve Sneyd's name in the pages of this magazine for nearly fifteen years, but only in the recent review of a major book, *In Coils of Earthen Hold,** have they learned here anything about him. There is much more to say, both about his work and the man himself, and now it is intended to do just that.

First of all, he is a very prolific writer. In a 1983 article Simon Clark wrote that "his output, already staggering, shows no sign of slackening and the quality of the work is still on the ascendant. To catalog all his published work would require a book . . . and it would be out of date before it was even printed." A decade later a special issue of the magazine *Skeletal Remains* (one of two put out expressly to feature his writings) estimated that his output then comprised some 2,400 poems plus 500 short stories, articles and reviews. He averages a periodical appearance every fortnight, and has contributed to at least 700 magazines. He somehow also finds time to write a couple of dozen letters a week and appear as host or guest on TV and radio programs. He's even to be found on CD Rom and cassettes, and runs a workshop at a Yorkshire school where he has been a writer in residence since 1992.

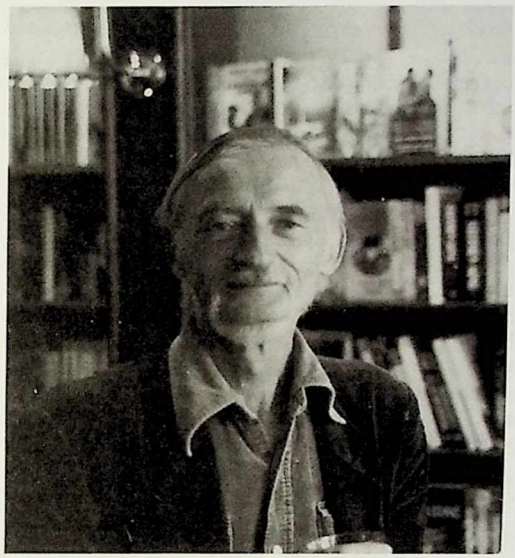
Despite these wide areas of expertise, Steve Sneyd is first and foremost a poet. He began composing poetry as a lad of sixteen, and first appeared in print in 1958, a year later. In 1962 he connected with Dave Cunliffe's small press magazine *Poetmeat,* and from then on there was no looking back. Many members of the small press community have a unique shared experience: whenever they discover and begin saving the serious small press publications, they notice Steve Sneyd's name popping out of each and every table of contents. My own experience echoes this. After years of reading and later submitting my own work to these, I suddenly realized that Steve had usually always been there first——and that I was often lucky enough to be sharing their pages with him. He may not be the most popular or the the most famous in that community, but he is well enough known there to be at its heart and soul. And he is appreciated, too: *The Small Press Register* has said, "With his free and fluid language, and his remarkable eye for contemporary life, he's one of the most elusive and yet widely published poets of the small press scene."

Thus far his honors include: the Trend Prize for Peace poetry in 1967; the Northern Star Poetry Prize and a Diploma de Merito from the Accademia Italia in 1983; "Best Poet" from the 1986 Small Press and Magazine Awards; the Peterson Prize in 1996; and three Rhysling Award nominations. His poetry has been included in such collections as *The Umbral Anthology of Science Fiction Poetry, The University of Salzburg Anthology of Contemporary English Poetry* and *Aliens and Lovers.* His prose is in *Whispers III, Horrorstory I* and volumes VIII and XIV of *The Year's Best Horror.*

Steve Sneyd's roots in the science-fiction community go deep. He is a founding member of The National Science Fiction Association. From the beginning, he says, genre themes and images were in "many ways nearer to my mind" than "the true historic 'mainstream' of literature." At about thirteen he discovered Asimov and Heinlein, "and in my later teens the much richer and darker work of Philip K.

Fantasy Commentator VIII, 205 (1993).

Dick, with its Kafkaesque willingness to interface the most orderly of people with the moat challenging of heresies about truth and reality." Other influences include a degree in chemistry, which helped him avert "techno-fear" in his writings and Michael Moorcock's *New Worlds* magazine, which showed him "the possibilities of poetry in inner *and* outer space." Also, the nuclear disarmament movement, he says, alerted him to "the dystopian possibilities of carelessly wielded technology."



Steve Snevd, 1995

Not only is he "probably the most widely published genre poet in the world," as Bruce Boston once observed, but Steve Sneyd has written extensively *about* science-fiction. Titles like "The Frontier Years of SF Poetry," "100 Things You Probably Never Knew about SF Poetry" and "A Concise History of Science Fiction Poetry" merely hint at the depth of his research. He has conducted interviews with Roger Zelazny, Duncan Lunan and A. C. Evans, and commented critically on the work of such luminaries as Brian Aldiss, Robert Bloch, John Brunner, Robert Calvert, August Derleth, Michael Johnson, Lilith Lorraine, John B. Michel and Michael Moorcock. His ongoing publication *Data Dump* lists all current fantasy verse he encounters, and is an extremely valuable source of historic information.

Data Dump, which he prints and distributes, exemplifies another of Steve Sneyd's activities: he is a publisher. It bears the logo of Hilltop Press, which he founded in 1966. In that year he began issuing a small fanzine titled *Riding West*; in 1971 this was segued into the cooperative *Ludd's Mill* magazine, which garnered widespread accolades for its poetic adventurousness. It was left under the capable guidance of Andrew Darlington in 1975, by which time Hilltop's program was becoming more ambitious and wide-ranging. It brought out chapbooks, anthologies, broadsheets and convention publications. The subjects varied from historical booklets about the work of local and old-time poets and an account of fortresses and castles in South Yorkshire titled *The Devil's Logbooks* to reprints of forgotten classics and two volumes of Arthurian verse. One of the most recent items is *You Can See the Past from Here*, which describes Hilltop's own history in entertaining detail. These publishing ventures, he feels, have provided him with "important insights into the problems and stresses faced in this field, and made it easier to be philosophical about the delayed and aborted projects encountered." It also makes one "even more aware of the tremendous achievements that do take place against all odds" at a time when commercial publishers have cut back on printing verse.

His own varied life experience has provided insights as well. Steve Sneyd has worked in the chemical industry, as an advertising copy writer, a door-to-door brush salesman, a fireworks mixer and stenciller, an import-export clerk, a correspondence clerk in Turkey, a dyestuffs laborer, a stock control recorder, a newspaperman and a creative writing tutor. Hitch-hiking, triggered by reading Kerouac's *On the Road* as a student, plus active involvement in the political left, provided further "layers of input." He credits writing copy for publicity departments of engineering firms, and then with a regional newspaper, for not only providing "the psy-

chological satisfaction of earning a living by writing," but honing his focusing and selectivity skills and his "creative tension" by keeping his own ideas separated from those being promulgated.

Beginning in the early 1970's, he says, "I found increasingly that writing in science-fictional terms provided an exteriorizing alternative viewpoint to the inhibiting claustrophobia that 'kitchen sink' poetry could induce.... Moreover we are, in Allen Ginsberg's words, 'all in science-fiction now'——that is, experiencing accelerated technical change which makes it increasingly impossible to write as if we all lived in a world-setting that the information revolution, quantum physics, and so on were not changing beyond recognition; and ourselves, in many ways, 'strangers in a strange land'...." This leads to what might be called Sneyd's Law: "All poetry is fantasy. No poem can accurately capture reality——assuming such a thing even exists."

Steve Sneyd credits his role of running workshops with encouraging his increasing urge to experiment in varying poetic forms. These include "a growth in use of syllabic structures" and experiments in what he calls data-density——"an almost black hole approach designed to . . . compress an approach towards 'truth' out of massed information." His work in this vein would include the chapbooks *Stars for Head and Feet,* which included "minisagas"——a form invented by Brian Aldiss, usually prose-poems, having exactly fifty words each; *In Transit Special #1*; *Fifty-Fifty Infinity,* which is entirely minisagas; *Bad News from the Stars*; and *We Are Not Men,* a palmtop collection of 5-7-5 syllabic science-fiction poems. The latter aren't truly haiku or senryu, he says, because they carry titles and have no seasonal references; "perhaps the name 'genryu' fits the form."

As late as 1976 his work still featured a personal voice, using words like "I," "my," "ours," etc. and incorporated a tender side——"teetering on the brink of sentimentality." But as early as 1974 his material was becoming more complex, eschewing punctuation and formal sentences. His verse took on a new focus, drifting to and over the edge of "mainstream" into the worlds of 'experimental" and "genre." Here are three examples showing those characteristics:

NEGOTIATIONS IN
THE CRAB SECTOR

excuse battlestart
delays: preparing to kill
immortals takes time

SHADES

The chameleon
dreams of staying one color
The budgerigar
dreams of not having to talk
The night
dreams of another sunrise
Me I dream of you

THE LIGHTHOUSES

We guarded Atlantis
till the sea,
by surprise,
took the prize.
Now, faithful to
necessity,
we guard
the sea

Although these short poems seem readily accessible, Sneyd's later and longer ones often require more work on the readers' part for full comprehension. "Sometimes he is genuinely obscure because he is not afraid to exploit the way information flows modulate into one another and create an odd reality that is essentially abstract," Fred Beake once noted. Bruce Boston has remarked that "his poems are rendered in a voice both distinctive and striking, yet a voice that at times can appear maddeningly opaque, convoluted, rife with obscure references and vocabulary, crowded with seemingly impenetrable sub-texts."

A strong sense of place has always figured prominently in Sneyd's work. His home area of England is known as the South Pennines, and it has been a steady focus for his poetry for decades, just as it has for generations of writers there before him. Names and geological features near his home are found even in his alien landscapes and futuristic fantasies. Not far from where he lives sits a prehistoric earth fortress amidst a landscape of bare hills, abandoned farms, decrepit factories and old Cold War antennas. This bizarre setting, he says, has

has influenced his work "a lot." He'll often link such locales to profound poetic themes which masquerade as travelogues. A passage from "Up Past Skeleton Field" illustrates this: "even the eternal is not unchanging / waiting in the rocks / patient as civil servant / for promotion old / monster merges into dusk ...." Even his compressed writing has been linked to a lifetime's listening with great acuteness to the speech patterns of his native West Yorkshire——what Fred Beake calls "its tendancy to move in phrase rather than strict sentence" with slow deliberateness.

Reflecting a cacophony of influences, his pockets sometimes bulge with scraps of paper carrying half-finished ideas or notes. He jots down whatever occurs to him while he's out and about, even during everyday routines. The significance of some notes may not become clear to him for a year or more, he says, until "a process very hard to describe brings some of those scribbles somehow into something more."

He writes primarily late at night in a small room next to his kitchen on a time-honored Adler typewriter. He believes his poetry functions chiefly as a channel for "mental downloading" by coming to terms with his life's experiences, and if he doesn't download like this every few days he'll grow "itchy and uncomfortable" until he does.

Though he can deliberately set an agenda with notes or images consciously acquired and consciously set aside, that is not how he writes. "Whatever 'I' does the writing, it isn't 'me,'" he explains. Much like dreaming, his subconscious does the actual composing in coded messages and invisible patterns obtained from the part of his brain that can be communicated with only indirectly. Only after this mysterious process takes place can his conscious self edit and polish the result. His very best work, he feels, represents the actual thought processes ——his brain speaking to itself in an internal shorthand which emerges onto the printed page as poetry.

But why continue to paraphrase and describe? Let us talk to Steve Sneyd himself!

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H. R. Felgenhauer: *Steve, in recent years you've been writing much more poetry than fiction. Why is this? Do you find prose more difficult to produce?*

Steve Sneyd: I used to write a lot of fiction, yes. But recently it's somehow moved away from me. When I try to write a story it insists on shedding material——links, redundancies, whatever you want to call them——which that part of me that writes regards as unnecessary, unneeded. But these are the things that would make it a story rather than a poem. Whether this situation will last, or whether I'll go back to fiction, I've no idea. Fortunately, it doesn't stop me from enjoying other people's fiction, or reviewing genre work. Doing that seems to be on a more conscious mental level than writing, for me, anyway.

What was behind your decision to concentrate on genre rather than mainstream material?

My genre work became more visible from the '70's on with the growth of genre little magazines, first in the States, and then from the early '80's in the U.K. as well. Until then, except for a handful of fanzines which still used poetry, there were no outlets for genre verse within the s-f community. So my s-f poems would appear scattered about in mainstream / slternative-mainstream "littles" where s-f people wouldn't see them.

I still do write some mainstream material, though I think a lot of the time it's only a temporary withdrawal. Of course, to what extent mainstream can ever reflect reality, or to what extent there is a consensus reality, are other, bigger questions.

This goes back to my impudently circular "Sneyd's Law," positing that since no poetry can truly reflect reality; all poetry must be fantasy! It's like the feeling I get reading Philip K. Dick's mainstream novels like *Puttering Around in a Small Land*——that the aliens have only gone off for a tea break and have left us an alien-shaped hole, a palpable absence as it were. Therefore I don't know how much there ever was a decision on my part in the sense you mean. I just felt that for me the "kitchen sink" sort of realist poetry had got as far as it was going, and I needed a different place to stand and look out from.

How did this relate to your evolution towards more complex presentation in your poetry?

Looking back, there seem to be cycles within my work, moves between periods of longer compositions and periods of short ones——between use of almost-chance (aleatory, if you like), reverse cut-up (or later, force-fit) on the one hand, and a more willed / intended thrust on the other. And there are sweeps into and out of syllabics, and so on. But I'm not enough of a statistician to tie actual topics to these curves.

What do you consider your most important published works to date?

I'll have to get a bit semantic here. If you mean important to me personally, and if by works you mean individual poems, I'd answer that some certainly do carry a higher emotional charge for me; but since I tend to be a distanced rather than a confessional poet, it would be baffling to list them. You see, the reason why they carry emotional impact isn't apparent in the poems themselves—— it relates to their underlying subject-matter and the circumstances of their composition.

If you mean important to the genre itself, I don't feel that's for me me to decide. And if you mean important to individual readers personally, that depends on parameters beyond my control——factors operating on their end of the transaction. To give an example, suppose someone said to me that she liked a particular poem because it reminded her of things she'd forgotten about her childhood. My words have triggered something in her memory-bank which is important to her, but might have no parallel in the mind of any other reader/ hearer.

This may not be a very helpful answer, I realize. But whether something is an important work isn't a way I would think about my poems.

When I asked Bruce Boston a similar question, he defined "important" as "serious ... in that it is attempting to do more than entertain." And why limit your answer to one poem? Aren't there any clusters or collections of them? Or themes you felt some urgency to address——and then found yourself proud of the results? And why limit ourselves to poetry? How about some of your scholarly essays? I'm trying to get a handle on what you feel are the crowning achievements, the "best yets" in your career to date.

From my viewpoint these are impossible questions——comparing chalk and cheese, as the saying goes——making decisions not my conscious mind's to make. There's also the old cliché that all writers hope or believe their best works are the ones they haven't written yet.

Bruce Boston's serious / entertainment dichotomy is fascinating to consider, but I should think applicable only in hindsight. I don't see how you could set out to write in significance or its opposite——especially since even the most trivial or lightweight piece carries elements of maha / magic, whatever the level of the audience mind. Hence the power of verse in In Memoriam columns, on greeting cards, etc., no matter how banal the form or content, to work on people. Or consider the weird way we apologize if by accident we rhyme in conversation!

Would something qualify as important by being your most widely accessible or distributed collection?

Assuming we mean accessible in terms of readily available rather than reader-accessible in terms of meaning, then my Arthurian set, *What Time Has Use For,* would qualify. It's had three printings and in its niche-market of Arthurian enthusiasts has probably enjoyed the highest penetration of any of my collections. It even got on the recommended reading list for the Arthurian Studies course at the University of Leicester. In numerical terms, the *We Are Not Men* palm-top is probably my biggest seller——around 600 copies so far.

Okay, if not "important," suppose we fall back on "favorite," although that's really an entirely different question.

I suppose I do have favorites, but these shift from time to time with mood or mindset, so it's again a question without a firm answer. I could list some I'd be very likely to use in readings, but I don't consciously know how much that would reflect personal fondness and how much I'm unconsciously reacting to past audience response. Even those choices would depend on how the reading was booked or advertised——whether I was labelled a regional poet, an s-f poet, or whatever. Yet whatever the type of reading, for several years I've always ended it with "Getaway Tactics"; but that's a kind of personal good luck charm thing, like rubbing a rabbit's foot or wearing a particular T-shirt on certain occasions.

"Getaway Tactics" is in *We Are Not Men*——"one door led only/to the moon ——burning the house /hid his fingerprints"——and it's one of a small group I've memorized without intentionally meaning to do so. It's tactically good, I think, to be looking solely at my audience and not reading from some book for the final payoff. If I had a more professional approach, I'd memorize a twenty or thirty minute set. But even after some forty years of readings I've still not managed that!

A couple of others I use a lot are "Jenny and the Conquerors," my feminist/pagan/witchcraft/Northern England defiance poem. I read this in the final round when I won the Peterson Trophy at Newcastle in May 1996. Also "The Evidence Cannot Be Denied," about a medieval Islamic astronomer and his son, despite its slightly odd elements and occasionally teetering on the brink of what I think of as sentimentality. I feel it has emotional truth regarding the father/son relationship, which is one of the haunting themes of poetry, as well as perhaps saying something about the astrology/astronomy interface. This is one of the great subthemes of s-f/speculative poetry——the in-leakage of the dark, occult side of the knowledge moon.

Are you a believer in astrology, by the way?

I don't believe in the system of astrology as it's commonly presented, though like many other people I 'll read my stars——I'm a Pisces——when I come across it in a newspaper column. But the principle that the moon, the sun and other planetary bodies influence life on Earth by their movements seems indisputable. The moon makes tides, the sun sets the seasons, Jupiter can cast a shadow, the zodiac in effect measures the seasons. It seems plausible to me that people, like animals, will be affected at least to some extent by the time of year when they were born. To the extent that astrology is an elaborate way of saying no more than that, it seems reasonable.

In a poetic sense I also find the intertwining of astrology and astronomy, as both grew to maturity from prehistoric origins, a fascinating source of symbolism. It's much like the interlocking of hermeticism and science, with Newton's occult involvements being a classic example. The effects of chaos theory, quantum/subatomic physics, etc., are clearly causing a new interfacing of such ideas, like Cabbalism's tree of life beginning a new dalliance with science as it were.

How would you describe yourself in terms of literary output, artistic temperament, areas of interest, past and future goals?

This is an immensely open-ended question; my answer could ramble on forever! Trying to keep it to sound-byte length: My output is relatively prolific. My artistic temperament could be described by the cliché "European Sensibility": that is, I'm realistic / pessimistic rather than yeah-saying. As to interests——within poetry——I find myself increasingly using syllabics more consciously, and I'd like to become less inhibited about utilizing the fullest possibilities of data-density. Also I don't feel I've yet got anywhere near my limits in the related field of force-fit work.

Past goals fall into two categories, things that got done and things that didn't. To use Robert Frazier's vivid phrase for projects that limbo on, neither dead nor alive, they "circle the drain," blurring future goals. Regarding the latter, I have long lists of poems I want to write and themes I want to write about. But what happens to them is more up to my "reptile brain" that does the writing than to my "mammal brain" that compiles wish-lists. I'd also like to collaborate further with artists on graphic poems.

Could you define those technical terms you've used—— syllabics, data-density and force-fit work?

Done properly, that would make an article in itself, but I'll try. The best known syllabic form is the haiku——three lines totalling 17 syllables——but there are multiple others. The numerological element in using them seems to go with my mind-set, like a patterning dance. It also helps compression, and I think it's liberating from the great problem with metric verse in English, namely that our emphases are too fluid and shifting for it always to be intuitive. With syllabics unconsciously counting syllables comes naturally, along with using the freedom to play slur-and-separate games with them.

To me, data-density is trying to operate on paper the way the mind operates on sensory input——slamming images against each other without using grammaticizing links. It's hard to fight off our conditioning to include these expanding links, and thus let redundancies leak back in. I certainly wouldn't claim to be as free and uninhibited as, say, the L.A.N.G.U.A.G.E. poets, or in s-f poetry the sadly underrated Peter Laughton; but I think the attempt is vitally important if you have any hope that your poem will reflect the actual workings of internal thought. I try to use this approach where it fits.

Force-fit is almost the reversal of Burroughs's "cut-up" approach——an almost purely aleatory (random, that is) selection of items which you then versify in the hopes that the process will reveal hidden links. There's a character in John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* who looks at apparently unrelated information bytes for this reason. That's a good example of what I mean by force-fit.

Let's see if I have this straight. To me, the "cut-up" method involves taking an existing block of prose which is then chopped into pieces; these are then tossed in the air and reassembled more or less randomly. In force-fit you do the opposite——combine seemingly unrelated ideas and concepts into a single block. You say in your book that paradox is the essence of poetry, and I think I can understand that. But why should these random bytes become related in a block? And what's the impetus to force-fit them together at all?

In extreme form, the mechanics of how it's done, or started anyhow, goes like this. You start with a pile of note-paper scraps with phrases or images on them. You pull out a few at random and see how/if they write themselves together. That's how I used to do it.

Isn't, perhaps, the real point *why* this can work?

Okay, why?

An analogy helps. Consider again this chap in *Stand on Zanzibar*. He's a government employee who's actually paid just to read randomly——newspapers, ar-

ticles, billboards——listen to media, and so on, in order to spot unsuspected connections between apparently unrelated fields. An element of that is at work here, I think. There's also the deep structure of language aspect, the one which kept negating the Surrealists' search for the truly non-rational / non-meaningful: that if you make a statement following the rules of language, it inevitably acquires meaning, or we give it meaning——against our will, if you like. Thus their famous phrase "green thoughts dream furiously" accrues a meaning purely by transaction with the reader. It's like the Strange Attractor in Chaos Theory.

I'll give you an example that really impressed me. At a s-f convention a few years back, a guy whose name I forget started showing a flickering homemade film of fireworks. Simultaneously, he started playing a tape of himself running through the streets on his way to the con, breathing heavily and talking to himself. Then he suddenly asked us, "Have you noticed anything?" Almost everyone in the audience agreed that the movie and the tape, two quite disconnected things, had melded into one experience. "That," he said, "is the Strange Attractor at work." With force-fit poetry, I think it's a mix of that factor and of connections we hadn't seen before.

What's the origin of this "reptile brain" / "mammal brain" phraseology?

I picked it up a long time ago from some secondary source. I was rather careless about storing data them, so I can't tell you exactly what that source was, but it clicked with me right away. It's recently been suggested to me that the application to poetry was pointed out by Robert Bly, but I haven't tracked that down. I assume it originates from behavioral psychology. One can look at it as a more down-to-earth and binding parallel to Freud's id / ego / superego concept.

Well, if the reptile dreams up ideas and the mammal writes, who gets out there and finds publishers?

The thick-skinned bureaucratic little clerk who can handle the endless writing of cover letters, preparing s.a.s.e's, checking endless listings in magazines, and so on. He's is a drudge locked into a boring, never-ending routine, but nevertheless performs a most important job. Unfortunately, almost every writer has to have this dreary gray head on on his / her shoulders.

Can you tell us a little more about your work habits? Do you have a "writing routine"?

Again, I could do an essay on this, but basically it boils down to "it depends." I use very little "set methology" and a lot of "just the way things come about."

Let's take your interest in graphic poems and collaborating with artists. Exactly how does that work?

I don't have any hard and fast rules. I've done it starting from the art, or from the verse, or as a feedback thing. I've even produced a couple of drawings myself, though I'm a terrible draughtsman! Graphic poems represent a large and growing though neglected area which has tremendous possibilities in an age where words and images are locked together in so many media. A recent article I wrote on the subject may be the very first to treat it specifically.

You've a lively interest in the history of genre poetry, and you've written a lot of articles in that vein. Are these collected or anthologized anywhere?

Not yet. A couple of people have suggested I should try getting at least a selection of them collected in book form. Whether it'll ever happen, dog knows! I already do have a few book-length publications dealing with special aspects of this area. One, which came out early in 1996, is *Flights from the Iron Moon: Genre Poetry in U.K. Fanzines and Little Magazines, 1980-1989*. Another from late

in the same year is called *Star Spangled Shadows*; it's my overview of poetry in American s-f zines from the 1930's to the '60's. Then there's *War of the Words*, a a sampler of fanzine "pomes," basically humorous and sarcastic parodies of the genre. Most recently I've completed *Fierce Far Suns*, about s-f and proto-s-f poetry in America from the 1750's to the 1960's. It's hardly profound, since I meant it only as an introduction for people over here, and I also used it to get a few particular fascinations off my chest.

Is this work as important to you as your other creative output?

I've been writing poetry for nearly forty years now, and writing about genre poetry for about a third of that. So in terms of time, the latter is obviously a lot less. To use my jargon again, the articles are mammal brain, the poetry reptile brain. In a lot of ways, then, they're not weighable against each other. I started doing the articles because it seemed to me they were on topics which should be looked at; other people seldom tackled them. Poetry, on the other hand, is a deep-level, self-identity thing. In that sense, yes, the poetry clearly is more important to whatever *gestalt* entity operates in my head in writing terms.

Have you ever tried to trace the genesis of your self-imposed impetus to write these historical articles?

I think trying to track down the roots of various drives and compulsions gets into such Heisenbergian/hall-of-mirrors situations that, ultimately, it becomes an exercise in futility. There are some things we do simply because we do them, and that's about all the answer that's readily available to us——anything else would in the end be just meaningless speculation.

Okay, let's forget meaningless speculation. What future topics have you been contemplating?

I've done quite a bit of research on the s-f verse of Edwin Morgan. He's probably the best known living big-name mainstream poet who also works in our genre. His s-f poems *have* been written about, but so far as I know never by anyone with an s-f background. There are interesting hints of hermetic ideas in his work which I want to explore. Hopefully, something will come out of this.

I've also just completed an article on graphic poems, which I've already cited as a large but neglected area. And I've begun an overview of Brian Aldiss's work as a poet. Much of this will draw on already written articles dealing with particular aspects of his poetry——its use in novels, etc.

I've still at least two installments to do on s-f poetry for *The Zone*, and fairly recently I've completed the chapbooks on poetry in early U.S. fanzines that I mentioned. As a result of writing them more information has come in, so I'll need to return to that area. Before I leave it I want to expand coverage into the 1990's.

Earlier, you expressed an interest in the dystopian vision of carelessly wielded technology. Aren't we humans coming a bit late to this topic, seeing it inevitably reverts back to hand axes, clubs and spears?

As a species, we're certainly capable of reducing the planet to a place where we'd no longer have a tolerable existence. As to whether that will happen, or whether short-termism will be overcome and we'll pull out of our nosedive in time——who knows? There are many scenarios: we might get the seed for survival off to another planet just in time, or some outside factor might intervene——an alien species could arise, or a pandemic could reëstablish equilibrium and so on.

In a lot of ways, being a poet is like being a sentient can in a garbage truck. You report the journey, but you don't know if it'll end in the crusher or a landfill site or the recycling plant or being saved by a scavanger——some dump-

beachcomber who'll paint you and fill you with flowers, or sell you to Andy Warhol's ghost to be labelled Art!

Relatedly, do you think a fictioneer should feel any responsibility to portray a balanced view of technology, rather than simply glorifying Utopian aspects of things like genetic engineering?

I feel responsibility to show what I "see," whether writing about my present or some imagined future. And I try to describe accurately, without distortion or editorializing——at least other than that which the cold, or hot, forging process of a poem enforces. I don't write to preach pro-technology, anti-technology, or any other stance. I'm just being there in the flux with people and things, places and machines and forces, as things happen.

In In Coils of Earthen Hold *you mention Philip K. Dick in relation to Franz Kafka. Is the "disruption of certainty," which you cite there, one of the tools of your trade?*

Didn't someone say, "Nothing is certain but uncertainty"? (My head is stuffed with unsourced quotes!) The hippies said, "Expect the unexpected." I'd certainly accept and work by/to the view explicit in Dick and Kafka: that whether or not there is for any individual such a thing as consensus reality, what operates is a shifting compromise between the input from the *idios* and the *koinos* cosmoses——the inner and the outer worlds.

Since neither are consciously controllable, if you go around feeling full of certainty, you're asking for a pratfall. So yes, it's certainly a tool, but I certainly would claim no originality in using it.

I don't know who said "Nothing is certain but uncertainty," but I do remember hearing on the Fireside Theater that "We have nothing to fear but me."

This could be relevant to our conversation if "me" is a protagonist full of certainty. I think what I was actually trying to ask about was the paranoia trademark that Dick and Kafka share. In other words, do you do much psychological horror, what Bruce Boston thinks of as existensialism, and would this disruption of certainty be a common jumping-off point for your work in this vein?

Wasn't it Conrad who said, "The horror! The horror!"? This is the essence of literature. Auden put it beautifully: "The crack in the teacup is the lane that leads to the Land of the Dead." And a Greek called Kallimachos said: "the death-world claws at everything."

Yes, it's just unavoidable as a metatheme. We're all doomed animals tying to cope with brains too fancy for our natures, marauding wolves pretending to be cooperative sheep——either way just conning ourselves into believing we'll live forever.

I suspect existentialism had a core of optimism: the constant recreation of the universe in our own image. I wouldn't share either this or its Nietzchean extreme. But clearly writing anything at all——in fact, even *doing* anything——betrays a level of optimism somewhere in the mind, if only that intelligence trying to pattern experience serves *some* purpose, be it only aesthetic/ritual "courtship." I've summarized all this in my Hilltop Press introduction to Clarke's *The Fantastic Muse,* by the way.

So yes, psychological horror is clearly an element in much, perhaps most, of my work. But an Englishman such as myself wouldn't tend to talk grandly of metaphysical despair or like things. Our characteristic understatement mode would be more likely to speak of something low-key, like the near-constant feeling of having lost a pound and found a half-penny. Auden again had the words for this: "the marginal grief / that is the source of life." Probably psychological horror is a cross-genre link throughout all my work, whether mainstream, s-f or whatever.

Basically, then, you do agree with Boston——so there's a second area of common ground for two of the leading voices in this field. Another early influence you've mentioned is Asimov. To me he's the Genre Giant. What do you feel you may have "taken" from him in terms of your own development and in your art in general?

I think the influence of Asimov would be simply that he existed, as a towering genre figure, rather than anything specific. The way he brought complexity to the man / artificial man or robot interrelationship, the tension he created by the way he pushed all the time against the self-imposed boundaries of his Laws of Robotics——these themes are probably deep in the background, somewhere, of the many poems I've written which explore the ambiguous dealings between flesh humans and "made" humans——robots, androids, and so on.

Back to Bruce Boston. You two have been mentioned in the same breath for so long that it would seem you were soul-mates of a sort. How do you compare yourself and your writings with him and his?

This is the most impossible question you've asked yet! We both have large bodies of work that vary in content and mood, so it's which bit you're going to relate to which. As a wild generalization, when we're both on genre terrain, maybe you could say that Boston is more limpid, more metaphysical, more in a way the big picture.

If it were a Western movie, maybe he'd be the guy with all the knowledge of the landscape who comes to lead the trapped wagon-train to safety, and I'd be the snake-oil salesman card-sharping his way out of the tumbleweedy near-ghost town as near the getaway route as I could be! So the dispatches going out——our picture of the human wilderness——would differ. Obviously we're both steeped in genre imagery and concepts——in themes, tropes and *topoi*, to use the jargon. So in that sense I'd think we were both drawing from the same inexhaustible well, even if we use rather different containers, to use another analogy. To that extent there have to be commonalities, since we both live in the same era of nuclear shadows, ecohorrors, and so on. But beyond that, I think comparing different voices is really some third party's task.

Oddly enough, however, after saying that I think of the recent news that one could have an electronic tombstone on the net. "We're living in science-fiction now," as Waldheim, Ginsberg, Calvert and others have all said. So maybe the real mode of comparison is that Bruce, myself and others who write poetry in the genres recognize that this *isn't* a what-you-see-is-what-you-get universe, that there's a lot more inside and outside than is apparent. This makes us part of the alternative mainstream, going back through Shelley and Blake and on to Gilgamesh or whatever——which to me is the *real* mainstream of poetry.

Would you now tell us more about your own alternative mainstream bastion, Hilltop Press?

The reprinting I do at Hilltop——though for reasons of time and money it's a lot less than I'd like——is of important genre work which I think got far less attention than it deserved when it originally was published. It may have appeared in the wrong place, for example, or lacked a readership which appreciated what was being attempted. The whole randomax set-up acts like a lottery in determining whether things get noticed or not; consider the total neglect of Blake in his lifetime, the near-total neglect of Lovecraft, and so on. So what little I can do to bring such work back into print, and give current readers a chance to discover it, I think I should do.

As for particular items I've republished, the reviews of Mike Johnson's *AE* have been mainly favorable and interested; they've also confirmed my view that at least within genre poetry it truly is, more than a decade on, still "cutting-

edge" in its experimental form. The reprint of Clarke's article from the 1930's about the need for genre poetry, accompanied by an early poem of his own, has sold well in the U.K.——in Hilltop Press terms, anyhow——and maybe emphasized that by now genre poetry not only has an established history, but has had attention from giants in the s-f field.

The articles on Lilith Lorraine have hopefully helped a little to remind people of an important pioneer in s-f poetry and an extraordinary woman. Some odd poems of hers have since been reprinted——as keynotes for two s-f anthologies over here, for example——so maybe another look is being given her achievements.

Asking Dave Calder if Hilltop could reprint his 1970's Rhysling-nominated "Spaceman" sequence had particularly happy consequences. He went back to it and found himself able to resolve and complete the work, adding two sections, and showing in the process how the intervening years of life experience have matured his outlook. This has had excellent reviews as well, and has been reprinted again in installment form by a fairly high circulation magazine.

What all this adds up to, dog knows——as I said, it's just something I'm doing, in a small and inadequate way, because it needs doing, and more generally, as with my genre poetry history articles, because I think there's value in seeing where we've come from. Perhaps it may help point out ways we might travel in the future, a "road not taken" (to quote Robert Frost) or at least not taken all the way, that we ought to go back to and travel further.

I greatly enjoyed the Lilith Lorraine saga. One footnote in it struck me in particular——the one where Ray Nelson said that in the 1940's the older fans respected her, but that the younger ones either hadn't heard of her or hated her. Wouldn't this relate to your concept of an "era of poetry discontinuity" and the "mind-benders rather than metal-bashers," about rhyme and meter falling out of favor with the increasing popularity of free verse?

The regrettable neglect of Lorraine nowadays may well be at least partly due to that discontinuity, but she did write some free verse under her own name. A great unsolved puzzle is her statement that she had free verse published widely under male pen names. These, unfortunately she kept secret even from her last editorial collaborator, Vernon Payne. What names did she use? There may be some real surprises in the old poetry magazines out there!

To speculate about the 1940's reaction against her——it could be a generational thing, partly a post-World War II reaction against seriousness in fandom, or perhaps a reaction to her own air of detachment; to my knowledge she only once ever spoke to a fan group, and presented her own Avalon Arts Acadamy as on a very high literary level. I don't think it was the form and content of her poetry, but just a general "She's not one of us" attitude.

What's in the wings for Hilltop Press?

I'd rather take a pass on that. I do have lots of projects in mind, but it's often unlucky to publicize things that might not happen in "real time."

Finally, if you had a wish-list forwhere and how s-f/speculative poetry should progress from where we are now, what would your top three wishes be?

My first wish would be that it reached out more and tried harder to find an audience outside the s-f ghetto, that it be more open to work from non-sf people that might be outside conventional genre expectations. Moorcock's search beyond the field for poetry he used in his *New Worlds* publications in the late 1960's shows a way to go. Wasn't it Robert Frazier who said that s-f poetry is uniquely placed to help us come to terms with, or anyway grasp, the technological changes we're currently living through? That need applies to everyone on the planet, not just s-f readers.

Second, I wish the genre would be more open to innovation in form. Free verse is as old as the motorcar now; it's become traditional alongside the other traditional forms. I'd hope to see the cutting edge of formal innovation, which in s-f poetry seemed to peak with Lee Ballantine's *Poly* in '89 and then fade back as if people found that work too much to come to terms with. Let's move ahead again——into visual interfaces, *real* hypertext with all those computer capabilities being fully used, and so on——from the graphic comic-strip poem to the unimaginables that are only unimaginable because no one's done 'em yet. Most s-f poetry now, just looking at it on the page as an artifact, is no different from what it was thirty years ago——or in most cases even a hundred years ago.

My third wish would be that contact got made in a really effective way with other languages——that genre poetry stop being, ostensibly, totally English-language centered. I can't believe it really is.

Do you have any parting words of wisdom for our readers?

I'd simply refer them back to your previous question and my answer, and ask them if they might help make some of my wish-list for genre poetry come true.

Thanks a lot, Steve, and good luck to all your endeavors.

FOUR POEMS

Steve Sneyd

REASON FOR VIEWING GALACTIC CENTRE

as cherry blossom
fall so pink so sad stare drop
into black forever
how tearful-joyed to know sense
tuned on our dead world works here

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

the funfair mirror reflects
all the explosive lies of the past:

ignore that, try
against distortion to straighten
hair, tie, smile,
prepare properly for first potentially
explosive contact between

Man and his successors: thin and clear
a sky as ice on
melting ponds

the stars indifferent swung above
highrope tricks

santa barbara sexpots on prowl
ignore them too

knitted tie knitted brow
why do you feel
so dragged down into
best unexplored
jungles of memory nothing

to do with the great occasion
like a man on a gallows-drop
wishing to hell he'd done

another road why me why now
another drink a better offer
I wouldn't have to have been here

maybe if negotiations don't go well
all the same maybe they'll
take me home with them

maybe they collect distorted
things maybe they really

up there need
someone to show just how like lies

you best tie a tie crooked

SHIPS FROM CICADA CLUSTER

From dark hulls bright wings
unfurl: sawing gun legs rasp
harsh songs on our ports,
remind dying of desert
sweat nights of lust. We
love those victories best where
those we crush are most
familiar things like Home, that
good old lost and found

ONCE IS ENOUGH

messily dead in
no-air arranged like wreath
the Milky Way around this

monster loathsome unsymmetry
made flesh personified
total lack of

pure clarity the
Universe Essential
One

denied by an obscene a
pollen of decay
orbiting rock diamond as

dirt circles a
clean seal-dome seeking
entry night or day

about it everything
double made me swoon with
sickness thinking

all mirrors broken bad luck for
ever seeing
two eyes two ears two

legs two arms two
balls
anyway first vomit contained clenched

teeth decided unusual even
picturesque once
accustomed as bad-death smell anyway

surely I would seem brave beyond belief to have
my first solo adult Voyage killed myself so
Unworld-born so impossible

a Thing
surely my lie only a little one to say
my work what world itself had done

oh Elders why now have you
not praised not welcomed not even ignored have
chosen to burn me as under focused

glass to scorch to flame saying

Messenger of Evil I who merely

wanted so much to be grown-up be hero

be forever
One with tribe's One

perfection's union

no longer alone in
singular
Universe

Much Ado about Nictzin

Everett F. Bleiler

In the May 1938 issue of *Weird Tales* Farnsworth Wright wrote, "Every time WEIRD TALES prints a story by Nictzin Dyalhis, the editor of this magazine receives letters asking where that talented author got such a bizarre 'pen name.'"

The question still arises. In my *Science-Fiction / The Early Years* (p. 214) I wrote, "Various stories have circulated about Dyalhis's name. He claimed that it was genuine, originating in Scottish memories of the Roman flamen dialis, but there have been reports that it was a modification of a more conventional name like Douglas or Dalziel."

In a review of the book in *Niekas* #44, Sam Moskowitz disputed my statement, saying that he had documentation proving that the author's name was really Dyalhis.[1]* I don't consider his documentation to have much value, but before I quote and comment on it, perhaps I should say who Nictzin Dyalhis was, since he is likely to be unknown except to survivors of the ancient pre-World War II days.

As far as is known, Dyalhis wrote ten stories, most of which were fantastic. His first two, which appeared in *Adventure* magazine, were Westerns with a regional background. "Who Keep the Desert Law" (October 20, 1922), set in Arizona in the Pima territory, is about a bad man who repays a debt to a kindly old squaw who saved his life. "For Wounding——Retaliation" (November 20, 1922), also set in Pima territory, brings the old squaw back in a rather muddled account of bootlegging and exploitation of the Indians.

After this he concentrated on fantastic fiction, all of which was published in *Weird Tales*. Two stories would count as weird science-fiction: "When the Green Star Waned" (April 1925) and its sequel "The Oath of Hul Jok" (September 1928). I have described them in some detail in *Science-Fiction / The Early Years*; they are crude, nasty and sadistic. His remaining stories are "The Eternal Conflict" (October 1925); "The Dark Lore" (October 1927); "The Red Witch" (April 1932); "The Sapphire Goddess" (February 1934); and "Heart of Atlantan" (September 1940).[2]

To return to Moskowitz's statement:

> In the case of Nictzin Dyalhis, appreciated *Weird Tales* author, [Bleiler] raises doubts as to whether Dyalhis is the author's real name. I have Dyalhis's death certificate, that *is* his real name, his father's name was Dyalhis, he was born June 4, 1880 in Pima, Arizona, one of the largest Indian reservations in the United States; his father was also born in Pima and Nictzin married a Toltec Indian woman. His death certificate lists him as "white" but it indicates that Nictzian Dyalhis is an Indian name.[3]

This looks convincing, but actually, as will be shown, the death certificate as quoted is a mass of confusion and error. The situation is far from being clear. In fact, it is a good case-study for not believing everything one reads, simply because it looks official.

In general: When a death certificate is issued it does not necessarily indicate that a detailed, meticulous verification of birth circumstances and life history has been made. It is based on family information, plus what other information happens to be available. If Dyalhis had lived his adult life as Nictzin Dyalhis, this identity would be accepted.[4]

To consider details on the certificate: It describes Dyalhis's wife as a Toltec. This is about as valid and credible as saying she was an Atlantean or a

*Notes for this article are on pp. 123-124.

Sumerian. The Toltecs have been extinct or absorbed for almost a thousand years. The claim is nonsense, but it points to a fanciful element in Dyalhis's life, beyond his name——like the word-distortions used in his early stories: "Aerth" for Earth, "Venhes" for Venus, "eathir" for ether.

When was he born? The death certificate states 1880. A letter from Dyalhis accompanying his first story, however, gives a different date; "In years nearly fifty——in heart, about sixteen——my wife's mother says I've never grown up!"[5] This implies that his birth date was a little later than 1872, exact year uncertain. Which date are we to believe, 1880 or 1872+? The probabilities certainly favor the latter; people prefer to be considered younger rather than older.

Where was Dyalhis born? The only specific information we have comes from the death certificate, which mentions the Pima territory. Perhaps supporting this is the regional background in his first two Western stories. Yet in this letter giving his life history, Dyalhis says, "A long time ago I went to the Southwest. My intentions were good——I was going to assay all the ore west of the Rockies!"[6] This is certainly a strange way to put it, if one was born and spent one's early childhood in Indian Territory in Arizona.

Was his father really born on the Pima reservation? According to Farnsworth Wright, on information received from Dyalhis in 1938, "His father was an English sea captain."[7] Is it at all likely that a man born in unsettled Indian Territory before 1860 or so would have left the desert, risen to become a captain in either the British navy or merchant marine, and then returned to the Arizona Territory to beget a child? This is straining probabilities. It is far more reasonable to accept that the death certificate is wrong here, too, and that ND's father was probably born in England or one of the colonies.

As for his mother, Wright goes on to state: "He [ND's father] married a lady from Central America, who mingled in her veins the blood of Castile and the proud Toltecs, whose civilization amazed the Spanish Conquistadores that came in contact with that amazing race. She bestowed on her infant son a name of her own people: *Nictzin.*" And in another note Wright states that "his mother came from Guatemala."[8] An English sea captain (or sailor) could well have met his future wife in Guatemale, which around i880 was opening up to European commerce.

I briefly considered the possibility (what with the claim that ND had been born in Arizona, despite Wright's information) that his mother might have been a Pima or Papago Indian, since at that time the Hohokam ruins in the Gila area and elsewhere were popularly considered Aztec or Toltec, and were called Houses of Montezuma. And the Toltec empire, according to Bernardino de Sahagun, who recorded Aztec traditions, extended up into the American Southwest. (This view is not accepted by modern archeologists.)

Against this is the name "Nictzin," which in Piman is an impossible phonetic combination. And, according to the major authority on Piman culture, Frank Russell, the Pimas did not permit miscegenation, but "destroyed infants of American or Mexican fathers."[9a]

I then checked farther south, going through the Central American Indian grammars and dictionaries in the Cornell University Library. Two possibilities emerged. The stronger is that "Nictzin" is Nahuatl (modern Aztec), which is still spoken by over a half million people. *Ni-* or *Nic-* is the first person singular in verbal forms, and *-tzin* is a common suffix meaning treasured, esteemed, etc. Modern dictionaries that I consulted do not record the exact form, but Bictzin could possibly mean "my treasure" or "my darling."[10] I am willing to accept that ND's mother called him "Darling"——but was that his legal name?

I also followed up the possibility recorded by Willis Conover, who lived near the man and actually visited him "several times": "He said that the first name 'Nictzin' was of Mexican Indian origin [and was] translated as 'Flower of Youth.'"[11] The closest form I could locate was from the Tzotzils, a Mayoid group, Here *nichim* means flower.[12] Chiapas adjoins Guatemala, but Quiche, the Maya spoken

there, does not seem to have this form or forms resembling "Nictzin."

My preference would be for the Nahuatl derivation. Phonetically it fits exactly, and there are Nahuatl enclaves in Guatemale. In any case, Toltec, which would be associated with the Valley of Mexico around 1100 A.D., is not relevant.

As to ND's surname, the death certificate declares it to be Indian in origin. But other information contradicts this. In *Weird Tales* Wright states, "the last name is one of the oldest English names";[8] and "Dyalhis is one of the oldest of English surnames, as it came to England with the Romans, whose priest of Jupiter was known as flamen dialis."[7] The latter statement is corroborated by Conover: "the last name was Scotch-Irish from the Roman god 'Flamen Dialis,' believed to be the source of the later names Dallas and Douglas."[11,13]

In contradiction to ND's claim, neither "Dyalhis" nor anything like it is registered in the standard reference work, P. H. Reaney's *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (second edition) or in his *Origin of English Surnames*, which also makes the point that there are *no* Roman survivals among English names. (If *dialis* really survived as such in England, antiquarians would surely have rejoiced!)

ND's etymology of his surname is nonsense, but it does suggest that it was something that sounded like *dialis*, which he then romanticized. In *Science-Fiction / The Early Years* I suggested "Dalziel" (which is pronounced "deal"); later "Dallas" occurred to me. What with Conover's statement, "the source of the later names of Dallas and Douglas," I would guess that ND's true name was Dallas. The fanciful death certificate cited by Moskowitz seems to indicate that ND's relicts (or whoever supplied information for it) had only vague, inaccurate knowledge about him, probably obtained from the man himself.

Is it possible that someone's own family would not know his true name or his early circumstances? Yes, indeed. I can point to a well established parallel——oddly enough, a man of the same generation, born in the West, and active in the same field of fantastic fiction. The great mathematician Eric Temple Bell, who wrote in the genre as John Taine, deliberately created a false life history, deceiving even his wife and son about his family background, childhood circumstances and early life. It took the researches of Constance Reid to uncover his deceptions.[14]

Potentially more interesting than Nictzin Dyalhis, who was a very minor author and probably would not be remembered at all except for his orthographic peculiarities, is his father. What were an English sea captain or sailor and his Central American wife doing in the Arizona desert around 1875? According to Russell, "for a period of thirty years, or from 1850 to 1880, the Pimas were visited by some of the vilest specimens of humanity that the white race has produced."[9b] White settlers usurped Pima land, stole the waters of the Gila River, and in general swindled and mistreated the Indians.

Was the captain one of those bad eggs? Let us hope not. Or had he gotten religion and was he saving Pima souls? According to Russell many Presbyterian missionaries opened schools among the Pimas around this time, as did the Methodists. Or was ND's father a would-be gold miner? The great Douglas mines were opening up nearby; gold had been found in the Gila River, and the Arizona Territory was well known from 1860 on as bonanza territory. The Cornell Library has several immigrant-enticers from the 1860's and 1870's telling of the mineral wealth of the region. Central America would also have been a good place to hear of these gold and silver strikes, since the usual route to the Southwest then was overland (Vanderbilt's route): through Nicaragua, up to California, and then down across. Or did the captain follow some other occupation?

Is there any evidence at all, beyond the statement in the death certificate, that ND or his parents lived in Arizona Territory as Dyalhis? Russell mentions by name many of the white settlers around 1880, but not Dyalhis. I realize this is a negative argument, but one would think that if an English sea captain named Dyalhis had lived there he would have been remembered.

The Cornell library is probably not the best place for checking Southwestern history, but I did go through over a hundred books there on Arizona and the Pimas looking for references to Dyalhises, Deals, Dalziels, Dallases, etc. This included historical works about the early settlement; Piman ethnography and history; memoirs of settlers; rosters of the military around the time; census reports; and so on.

This is what I found. In the 1880's there was a Frank Daily who married "a fine Mexican woman" and owned a ranch near Oracle, which is in the Pima territory.[15] I think this is just chance. Daily's early life is known; he was a local cowpuncher, and to accept him as ND's father would mean rejecting everything ND claimed. There was also a settler, elected captain of the Mohave Rifles, "with the unusual name of Robert D'Yhr."[16] (Did locals with strange names abound?) Further afield is one Shorty Dallas, who was murdered at his ranch in 1894.[17]

To go beyond this one would have to travel to Arizona and check primary sources, which probably would not be worth the trouble. Unfortunately, too, privacy laws there (as in some other states) now prohibit one from getting birth certificates unless one is a family member. Also assuming, of course, one knew what name to ask for in this case.

There is the further question as to what a birth certificate would be worth.[18] Many a Britisher lived under an assumed name in the old Southwest; names were garbled or deliberately changed on coming though immigration centers. And no one checks identity——even at present. When my children were born in primitive, pioneer New York City and New Jersey in the 1960's, I didn't have to establish my own or my wife's identities. As long as I paid the bills, for all anyone cared, I could have been John Dillinger, Jr. or the Grand Duchess Anastasia with a sex change.

In summary: The general concatenation around Nictzin Dyalhis does not inspire confidence. It seems to me that basically one has two choices: to accept Farnsworth Wright's information stripped of romanticism, or else consider Dyalhis a liar about whom nothing can reliably be said.

If we accept Wright and the birthplace cited on the death certificate, while our data are by no means secure, a reasonable conclusion is that ND's father was British, a sailor of some sort, and his mother a Guatemalan mestiza of partial Aztec stock. The two settled in Arizona, probably as part of the gold rush of the day, and their son was born there at some time shortly after 1872. The family name was most likely to have been Dallas, which ND elaborated into Dyalhis. Nictzin may or may not have been his legal first name.

NOTES

(1) Lest this article be taken as an attack on Sam Moskowitz, held off until after his death, I should state that a previous letter version of it was submitted to and accepted by the editor of *Niekas* in December 1994, but was not printed. Since there seemed little likelihood of its ever being published, I have withdrawn and rewritten it, omitting other criticisms of the review and adding new material. I do not know whether the editor ever sent a copy of my original letter to Sam Moskowitz.

(2) Five of Dyalhis's stories have been reprinted:
"Heart of Atlantan" in: *The Magic of Atlantis* (1970), ed. Lin Carter; *Weird Tales* and *More Weird Tales* (both 1978), both ed. Peter Haining.
"The Red Witch" in: *Echoes of Valor III* (1991), ed. Karl Edward Wagner.
"The Sapphire Goddess" in: *Worlds of Weird* (1965), ed. Leo Margulies; *Echoes of Valor III* (1991), ed. Karl Edward Wagner.
"The Sapphire Siren" (same as "The Sapphire Goddess") in: *Weird Tales*, Feb. 1934; *Avon Fantasy Reader* #17 (1951), ed. George Ernsberger; *Avon Fantasy Reader* (1969), ed. Donald A. Wollheim and Geo. Ernsberger; *Weird Tales* #2 (1981), ed. Lin Carter.
"The Sea Witch" in: *Weird Tales*, July 1953; *Weird Tales* (1964), ed. Leo Margulies; *Echoes of Valor III* (1991), ed. Karl Edward Wagner.
"When the Green Star Waned" in: *Weird Tales*, Jan. 1929; *Beyond Time and Space* (1950), ed. August Derleth; *32 Unearthed Terrors* (1988), ed. Stefan R. Dziemianowicz.

(3) *Niekas* #44, p. 24.

(4) I can speak of this from personal knowledge regarding family deaths. Proffered information is accepted without question.

(5) *Adventure*, Oct. 20, 1922, p. 184.

(6) The full text of Dyalhis's autobiographical letter, headed "Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania," is as follows:

"Hello, the Fire!

"In the old days it paid to stand off and yell, and not approach too close until actually invited. Of course, the invitation is an open one, but, even so, although frequently tempted to walk into the light, I have refrained until I felt justified in coming in out of the wet.

"By profession I am a chemist. In years nearly fifty—in heart, about sixteen—my wife's mother says I've never grown up! One way she's quite right, for I am one of those sawed-off, hammered-down, weazened-up runts weighing—when I'm fat and sassy—from five to ten pounds over one hundred.

"A long time ago I went to the South-west. My intentions were good—I was going to assay all the ore west of the Rockies!

"Rex Beach wrote a book once called "Pardners"—in that book an old-timer says, 'Thar's two diseases no doctor has any right meddlin' with—one's hoss-racing, t'other's prospectin'.' He's quite right! I know! Assaying? Pooh-pooh! An old man, with more pity on my ignorance than I deserved, took me with him on the desert.

"Bitten at a tender age, what hope remained for one thus afflicted?

"Sure, I've done lots of other things since, but—I went one trip snapper-fishing in the Gulf when only a 'kid-of-a-boy.' I took one trip and one 'down-de-bay' out of Baltimo' on an oyster-dredger in the bad old days of the 'pungy,' the 'bug-eye' and the brogan-canoe'! I've signed out on more than one 'tall water' cruise, but I invariably turned up missing before the return trip. Because why? Prospectin' was good somewhere up country!

"I've prospected for gold, silver, platinum, tungsten, several of the commercial minerals, and, above all, for gems and precious stones, including pearls (fresh-water variety), also, turquoise and ruby (domestic and foreign). Did I ever strike it rich? I'll say I DID! I'm worth exactly eleven million seven hundred thousand dollars—in experience which otherwise I might never have had! Money? How do you get that way? I'm dead broke!

"'Never made any?' Oh, yes, I did—but I used it! What am I to do when Winter comes? Before the next snow-fly I'll be on the trail again. Following that, I should care! And the worst of it all is—my wife aids and abets me in my sins! And she's no slouch with a pan, a dry-washer, or a jassacks! She can tie all 'them' hitches—hackamore, hobble, diamond and squaw. Also, she knows a dang-sight more than I do about pearls.

"Now I've no contract to use up all the paper in sight, so here we rest—YOU probably need it after this screed!

"And to you about the Fire—may your shadow never grow less. And to those on the trails—may your feet never grew [*sic*] wearied.

"And so—Good night.—NICTZIN DYALHIS."

(7) *Weird Tales 31*, 632 (May 1938). The full text of Wright's comments is: "Every time WEIRD TALES prints a story by Nictzin Dyalhis, the editor of this magazine receives letters asking where that talented author got such a bizarre 'pen name.' These inquirers may be surprized to learn that Nictzin Dyalhis is not a pen name at all, but is the actual name of a very real person. *Dyalhis* is one of the oldest English surnames, as it came into England with the Romans, whose priest of Jupiter was known as *flamen dialis*. The father of Nictzin Dyalhis was an English sea captain. He married a lady from Central America, who mingled in her veins the blood of Castile and the proud Toltecs, whose civilization amazed the Spanish Conquistadores who came in contact with that amazing race. She bestowed on her infant son a name of her own people: 'Nictzin.'"

(8) *Weird Tales 17*, 440 (July 1931): "Nictzin Dyalhis is a real and not a book name. The first name is Toltec Indian (his mother came from Guatemala); the last name is one of the oldest of English names.

(9) a) *The Pima Indians* (BAE Report 26, 1904-5), p. 185. b) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(10) For grammatical forms I used Thelma D. Sullivan's *Compendio de la Gramatica Nahuatl* (1974).

(11) Cited in "Nictzin Dyalhis: Mysterious Master of Fantasy," by Sam Moskowitz, in *Echoes of Valor III* (1991), ed. by Karl Edward Wagner, p. 252. I must express gratitude to T. G. Cockcroft, who called my attention to this article.

(12) Colin G. Delgaty, *Vocabulario-Tzotzil de San Andres, Chipas* (1964).

(13) In the given citations, Wright is correct in describing the Roman *flamen dialis* as a priest, while Conover is wrong in describing him as a god. The Roman *dialis*, however, officiated in Rome and was not allowed to leave the city. He would be totally irrelevant in a British circumstance. According to Basil Cottle (*The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames*, 2nd edn., 1978), both Dallas and Douglas are of Celtic origin. Dallas means a place in a meadow (perhaps a corruption of dale house); Douglas means black water, dark stream.

(14) See her biography, *The Quest for Eric Temple Bell* (1993).

(15) Emerson O. Stratton and Edith Stratton Kitt, *Reminiscences* (1964), p. 121.

(16) Nell Murbarger, *Ghosts of the Adobe Walls* (1964), p. 162.

(17) Jennie Parks Ringgold, *Frontier Days in the Southwest* (1952), p. 132.

(18) Concerning the fallibility of birth certificates: On one occasion when I wrote for a copy of my own, I was sent a document with my name on it but with incorrectly transcribed dates, which made me about twenty years younger than I was. In addition, future historians who check my birth certificate (assuming anyone is interested and that he or she can get access to it) will discover that it incorporates a bad error.

ONLY

Only dreams remain
  Within Man's mind;
  They weave and wind
Patterns in a silver chain
Linking brain to brain.

Only dreamers are
  Untied and free,
  Their slavery
Thralled to some imagined star
Flickering so far.

—*Steve Eng*

Conrad H. Ruppert:

VISIONARY OF THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

John L. Coker III

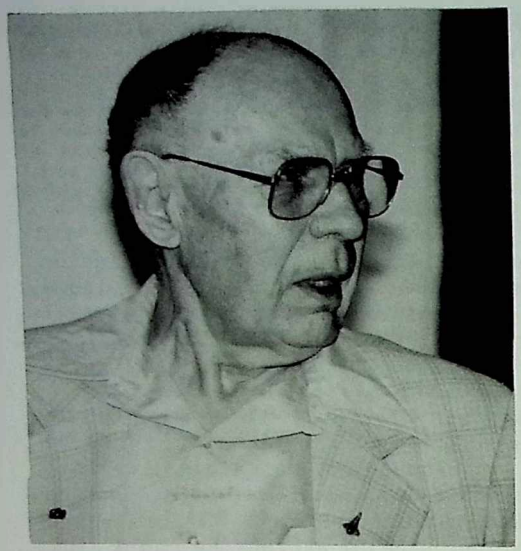
Conrad H. ("Connie") Ruppert, one of the last of the science-fiction fans of his generation, died of heart and lung failure on August 28, 1997 following an in-hospital procedure. He was eighty-four years old. Although he will probably be best remembered in mundane circles for his superb historic photography, he made numerous contributions to fandom from the late 1920's through the early 1940's, primarily as the provider of printing services.

He was born in Brooklyn, N. Y. on November 13, 1912. As a boy, Connie enjoyed reading the Tom Swift novels and the adventures of King Arthur. When he was ten, and confined to bed with rheumatic fever, among the magazines provided him by his mother was an issue of Hugo Gernsback's *Science and Invention*. It was here that he first experienced that sense of wonder which he kept as long as he lived. He sought out back numbers of the magazine, reading all that he could find. When he was twelve years old he applied for a card which made him an official *Science and Invention* reporter. He submitted a number of articles to the magazine, some of which Gernsback published. During his teens Connie spent much time in his local public library reading all the science-fiction available there, especially the works of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells.

During 1929-1930, while studying electrical engineering at Indiana's Tri-State College, Ruppert maintained an active correspondence with the fans Raymond A. Palmer and Walter Dennis; and as part of a campaign to promote Science Fiction Week in 1930 he convinced newspapers in several major cities to run editorials in support of the idea. At about this time Gernsback was sponsoring a contest to recognize people for their contributions to science-fiction, and even though Connie had somehow not heard of it, he was awarded the $50 second prize.

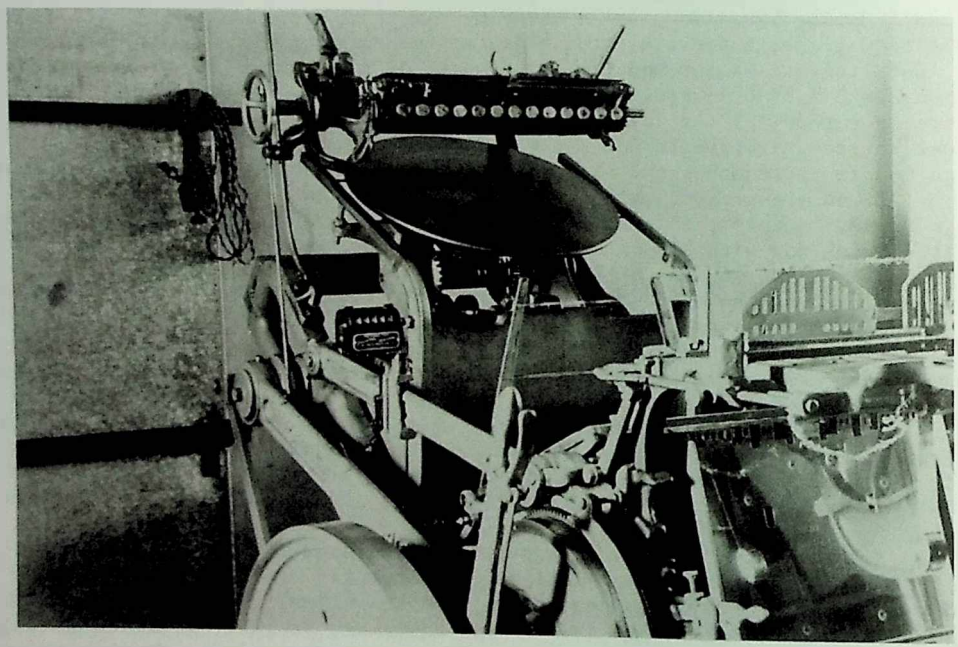
Soon afterwards, while working as an assistant in his father's bakery, Connie Ruppert's interest in publishing manifested itself. He bought a small, hand-operated press and with his friend Donald Alexander began printing small booklets. They bought reprint rights to A. Merritt's short story "Through the Dragon Glass" and released it as their first publication under the byline of "ARRA Publishers." Then came what proved to be a major turning-point in genre history. Connie received a sample copy of an early issue of *The Time Traveller*, science-fiction's second fan magazine. Noting that it was mimeographed, he contacted editor Allan Glasser; and after several meetings they agreed that he would begin printing the magazine. This he did, beginning with the third (March 1932) number. Ruppert's neat production greatly enhanced the appearance of this fledgling publication and led to an increase in its circulation. Its professional look also attracted the interest of established writers in the field, many of whom thereafter contributed material for its pages free of charge.

During 1932-1935 Connie Ruppert produced some of the finest fan periodicals in the history of science-fiction. He lovingly set the type by hand for several more of the monthly issues of *The Time Traveller*, and then with Palmer, Julius Schwartz, Mort Weisinger and Forrest Ackerman, brought out its equally legendary successors, *Science Fiction Digest* and *Fantasy Magazine*. During the same period he type-set and printed all eighteen issues of Charles D. Hornig's monthly magazine *The Fantasy Fan*, whose quality so impressed Gernsback that he offered Hornig an editorial position with *Wonder Stories*. In addition to these duties,



Conrad Ruppert at the
V-Con XIV, April 1995

Julius Schwartz and
Conrad Ruppert, *circa* 1940



The press used by Ruppert in 1936 to print the
Weinbaum Memorial Volume, *Dawn of Flame*

Ruppert was also at various times a columnist, editor, advisor and business partner in these pioneering fannish enterprises.

Like others in the field at that time, he had the idea of doing a comic strip, and in 1934 approached the artist Clay Ferguson, Jr. to work with him on it. Ruppert wanted a strip where he would supply the story-line and character development and Ferguson would do the illustrations. It was to feature a superbeing, a young man from another solar system who fell in love with a princess of a planet there. The king opposed this relationship, and punished the suitor by making him immortal. The lovers were banished to the outermost planet, where they lived until the woman and her children died. Over time the man gained extraordinary strength and exceptional mental powers, and travelled from planet to planet, doing good and righting wrongs. A few sample strips were prepared and syndicates contacted, but there was no interest and the idea was eventually abandoned.

Increasing business obligations were making it more and more difficult for Ruppert to donate the time to type-set and publish fan journals, and after *Fantasy Magazine*'s third anniversary issue William Crawford took on these responsibilities. However, Connie remained active in the field through the late 1930's. He attended important meetings and established friendships with such luminaries as H. P. Lovecraft, David Keller, Otto Binder, A. Merritt, Frank Belknap Long, Jr., Otis Adelbert Kline and Arthur J. Burks, and met such aspiring newcomers as Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury and Robert Heinlein.

Following the death of Stanley G. Weinbaum in 1936, the Milwaukee Fictioneers, with the support of Mort Weisinger and Julius Schwartz, resolved to issue a memorial volume of his stories. Palmer managed most of the production, and Ruppert made time to print the volume at cost. In early 1939 Schwartz approached him about printing a souvenir booklet for the First World Science Fiction Convention, and together they sold enough advertisments in it to raise the $60 cost of production. The booklet had a striking gold cover and featured interior artwork by Frank R. Paul, the convention's guest of honor. On the morning of the convention Connie posted himself at the hall entrance to photograph the professionals and prominent fans as they arrived.

During that same summer Ruppert took many photographs at the New York World's Fair. Realizing that his involvement in fandom was waning at the same time as a war in Europe was brewing, the Utopian vision of the fair must certainly have seemed to him as a culminating metaphor of all his efforts in science-fiction over the previous fifteen years.

Ruppert sold his printing business in 1941, and was drafted into the army in April 1942. He received a medical discharge fourteen months later, and returned home to work and raise a family. There was little time to devote to fandom, although he continued to read science-fiction. His passion for photography now led him to begin taking scenic pictures and making films, and in doing so he preserved for future generations many vanishing images of eastern Long Island. Over the years he won awards and recognition for these, and enjoyed putting on exhibitions and giving slide shows in the public schools. In 1989 thirty of his photographs of the 1939 World's Fair appeared in a book titled *The World of Tomorrow*.

In the summer of 1969 Connie experienced what he called "the thrill of a lifetime," watching a live broadcast of Neil Armstrong walking on the Moon. It was the transformation into reality of the marvels of television and rockets that he had read about in the 1920's, and believed science would some day achieve.

Perhaps this eventually led, after a half-century's hiatus, to Connie's return to the field. In 1992 he attended the fiftieth World Science Fiction Convention, where he enjoyed a reunion with Schwartz, Ackerman, Sam Moskowitz and others. This event seemed to rejuvenate him, and he once again became involved in fandom. During the last five years of his life he renewed correspondence with old friends, and began attending conventions and First Fandom reunions.

In April 1994 Connie Ruppert received the Raymond Z. Gallun Award at the I-Con at Stony Brook, New York. In May of the same year he had 32 of his photographs of the 1939 World's Fair "showing science as a promoter and entertainer" featured as part of a major permanent exhibition entitled "Science in American Life" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History at Washington.

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THE IMMORTAL STORM II

A History of Science-Fiction Fandom

PART FOUR

Sam Moskowitz

Among the prominent Los Angeles fans who successfully aspired to writing and publishing at this time was Arthur Louis Joquel II. In the space of a single year he managed to bring out no fewer than seven different titles. Joquel began with an impressive fan magazine called *Specula*. This was mimeographed, had a half-letter-sized (8½" by 5½") format with even edges, and ran to 84 pages. The first issue was dated January 1941, and featured fan-written fiction. All of it was written by Joquel himself, though most was credited to various pseudonyms. *Specula* also printed non-fiction, and two such items warrant special comment.

One was attributed to Carlton J. Fassbeinder, a pen name openly used by T. Bruce Yerke. Yerke was somewhat older than the average fan, and had then begun a career in journalism. He is remembered today for his delightful fanzine *The Damn Thing* (six issues, 1940-1942); for such sophisticated and witty articles as his "Thoughts on Falling Backward in a Swivel Chair"; and as a distinguished historian of Los Angeles fandom in the 1940's.

The second was a purported interview by Forrest J. Ackerman of Austin Hall, co-author with Homer Eon Flint of the renowned novel *The Blind Spot*. Since Hall had died eight years earlier, any interview with him must have taken place no later than 1933. A plausible suggestion is that the piece was a reworking of notes Ackerman took when talking to the man early in that year, and on which he had already based his article "Meet Austin Hall" (*Science Fiction Digest*, June 1933). (Information about Hall is very scanty. Aside from a brief autobiography these two sketches constitute, even today, about all that is known about him.)

The second (and only other) issue of *Specula* was dated March 1941; it had 78 pages in the same mimeographed format. Its only item of historical interest is an interview by Ackerman of Curt Siodmak, author of the science-fiction novel *F. P. 1 Does Not Reply* (1933) and, later, *Donovan's Brain* (1953). The cover of *Specula* #2 is also worthy of note. It had been fashioned innovatively by pressing a metal line-cut on a mimeograph stencil; this reproduced well and the result elicited much favorable comment from readers. Somehow, however, the practice never spread to other fan publications.

At almost the same time as *Specula*, Joquel began another fanzine titled *Sun Trails*. Its first number was undated, but Joquel suggested that readers label it Winter 1941. Two of its articles are of interest. The first was based on the editor's interest in graphology. He secured the signatures of such prominent fantastistes as John W. Campbell, Hugo Gernsback, A. Merritt, Frank R. Paul and oth-

ers, and briefly analyzed their characteristics. The second article, "Just Be-Tweenie Us," Half-Brat!", also written by Joquel, was a rebuttal to an earlier one by Isaac Asimov titled "Old Classics——Phooey!" (*Stellar Tales* #1, Winter 1941). The latter is important in that it may well be the only extant record of Asimov's candid (if early——he was then but 21) opinions of other writers in the field. His article excoriated A. Merritt at length, calling his work "drivel." He extolled L. Ron Hubbard "as a fantasy writer can take Merritt and Lovecraft, lump them together, give them a light-year head start, and beat them without raising a sweat," and didn't "think Meritt, Lovecraft, Cummings, Farley, Flint, Hall, England or any of those guys" were "fit to polish the shoes of Heinlein, Hubbard, de Camp and van Vogt." In his reply Joquel suggested that Asimov had targeted Merritt primarily because of his popularity, and that he had praised only authors appearing in *Astounding Stories* because he hoped to enhance his own chances of selling fiction to Campbell. He also deplored Asimov's polemical tone.

It seems germane here to interpolate a little information about *Stellar Tales* and its publisher. The magazine was hektographed on legal-sized sheets by the Pennsylvania fan Blaine R. Dunmire under the aegis of Black Diamond Publications. Along with the Asimov piece, the first issue printed material by professional fantasy authors Basil Weiss and J. Harvey Haggard, as well as a profile of Joquel by Ackerman and Morojo. The latter characterized its subject in part as follows: "He asserts he has little faith in science; is . . . is [a] believer in astrology; [a] follower of Fort; [and a] personal acquaintance of Manly Hall, the mystic. Joquel is a pacifistically inclined, socialistically minded young man with odd ideas that persons shouldn't take money for things they like to do. . . . He has his own mimeo and says that journalism is in his blood."

In the Spring of 1941 Dunmire was drafted into the armed forces. He turned *Stellar Tales* over to Leonard Moffatt, who was already issuing his own fanzine *Moonshine* for distribution in the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Moffatt eventually put out one more issue, dated Summer 1943. It was still hektographed, but now letter-sized and had fewer pages; material by Nelson S. Bond, James Blish, Basil Wells and Graph Waldeyer was featured. Dunmire had also brought out a single number of *The Ghoul and Fanta*, a fanzine slanted towards the supernatural; that he turned over to another local fan, Jack Gilbert, but no further issues appeared. This brief account summarizes the activities of Blaine Dunmire, who died in action during World War II.

The second (Summer 1941) issue of Joquel's *Sun Trails* reprinted a group of early letters to the professional magazines by then prominent fans, and carried a crudely executed cartoon by Ray Bradbury. The rest of the number was devoted to speculations and comments by the editor himself. One topic which particularly provoked his criticism was an appraisal of all his fan publications (including one title that had been announced but never actually published) that had appeared in the June 1941 fanzine *X (The Futurian Review)* under the name of Ritter Conway, an obvious *nom de plume*——or, to be precise, an *X* house-name.

It should be noted that at this time the Futurians had begun to publish many of their contributions to the fan press pseudonymously, especially those items which were politically oriented. This was because several Futurians (as we have already seen) had joined the professional ranks as authors and editors, and wanted to avoid antagonizing anyone in a position to discriminate against them. For the first time they were beginning to sell fiction to magazines they did not control, and were particularly anxious to be on good terms with editors there.

The actual authorship of the article in *X* cannot be stated with certainty; we do know, however, that the pages bearing it were printed from stencils cut on Robert W. Lowndes's typewriter. "Conway" both praised and panned Joquel's publications, but was particularly critical of two which I have not yet cited, *Scorpio* and *FMZ Digest*. The former was termed "a religious tract," with concepts comparable to those promulgated by Hitler; and because the acronym "FMZ" (fan mag-

azine) was usually pronounced like "femmes," the writer claimed it invited homosexual inferences. Let us look at these two publications in detail.

The single issue of *Scorpio* that Joquel produced was dated March 1941, and had 26 half-sized pages. In it he was attempting to create a fan magazine with both fiction and non-fiction that appealed to interest in the occult and supernatural. Fiction predominated, and it was generously laced with references to the Cthulhu mythos and various "forbidden" books mentioned in stories by H. P. Lovecraft. One article, "The Book of Dyzan," treated a factual work. This was "The Stanzas of Dyzan," which supposedly influenced Helena P. Blavatsky so deeply that she included them in her book *The Secret Doctrine* (1888); they relate a purported creation and future of the Earth and the universe. (Joquel said he intended to reprint them with commentary, but apparently never did so.) The article was bylined "Fywerte Kinge," which Joquel claimed was not his own pen name.

FMZ Digest, the second title cited by the Futurians, was devoted to reprinting (sometimes in condensed form) the best items which had appeared in other fanzines. It was mimeographed in a neat two-column format, sometimes in two colors, and was brought out monthly for five issues beginning with the one dated February-March 1941. All of the material used, which covered a wide spectrum, was current——i. e., had originally appeared during 1941. Much of it bore the bylines of such professionals as Leigh Brackett, Ray Bradbury, August Derleth, J. Harvey Haggard, Carl Jacobi, Clifford D. Simak and F. Orlin Tremaine. Prominent fans were represented as well. None of these items either portrayed or advocated a gay outlook.

Response from readers indicated that *FMZ Digest* was extremely well received——indeed, it was probably Joquel's most popular (and certainly his longest running) publication. Why, then, was it discontinued? In a belated sixth (and final) issue dated October 1941 he gave the reasons: time-pressure from his own job, the increased cost of mimeograph supplies, his inability to acquire all the fanzines being published, and the lack of quality in those he did obtain. Nowhere was poor support by readers cited or implied, although the denigrative remarks by "Ritter Conway" may have had a discouraging effect. It seems likely that the magazine was simply an early casualty of the growing pressures on fandom imposed by World War II, possibly exacerbated by Joquel's own ambitious publishing program.

The final issue of *FMZ Digest* contained one other item of interest: a listing compiled by the editor of all the fanzines that he knew were being currently published, along with subscription rates and the names and addresses of their editors. This was a useful checklist, since it included overseas titles, though it did not list all the ones distributed through the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

Joquel was responsible for three other publications during 1941, the most imposing of which was titled *Spectra*. To discuss this properly we must first review a bit of history.

In England there had been at least three informational chain letters in recent circulation, notably Arthur Clarke's *Fan Mail*, which was mentioned in chapter III of this history.* Each recipient would append his own letter to those he received, and then pass on the accumulation to the next correspondent; at some predesignated point the beginner usually received the whole assemblage. (Unfortunately, none of these seem ever to have been published.) Joquel now decided to introduce this idea in the United States. He designated eleven fans to write each other in this chainwise fashion. All the letters were then given to Joquel, who added a prefatory letter of his own plus a column responding to the contributors, and reprinted everything late in 1941 as *Spectra* #1. This was mimeographed, had 34 letter-sized pages, and carried a cover illustration by Tom Wright that had been a part of the latter's letter.

**Fantasy Commentator VIII*, 285 (1995).

This fanzine is of considerable historic interest. In it Joquel, for example, revealed some of his own background. He had started reading science-fiction, he said, with the February 1928 issue of *Amazing Stories,* which contained "The Revolt of the Pedestrians" by David H. Keller. He had done some amateur publishing since then; though he gave no details, it must have been outside the fantasy field. His interests were wide-ranging, and his greatest passion was for classical music. Joseph Gilbert, in the first letter of the series, listed the membership of the Dixie Fantasy Federation, of which he was the secretary. They were Fred W. Fischer, Earle Barr Hansen, Harry Jenkins, W. B. McQueen, Arthur R. Sehnert, Jack Speer and Harry Warner, Jr. Almost all of these fans were well known at the time.

The topics discussed in these letters were also interesting. Among them were whether Merritt would ever get to work on a new book and the quality of his writing, on which views were quite favorable. Opinions on the writing ability of L. Sprague de Camp, however, were distinctly divided. Comments on James Blish's article on fantasy music (*Spaceways,* March and April 1941; *FMZ Digest,* June 1941) showed that several of the letter-writers possessed a detailed knowledge of the subject. Much skepticism was expressed over Julius Unger's claim that each issue of his newsweekly *Fantasy Fiction Field* cost between nine and ten dollars to produce. That seemed excessive to most of these fans despite a print-run of 300 and the regular inclusion of photographs——which illustrates how cheaply fanmagazines were to produce in those prewar days.

After Armageddon is credited to Fywert Kinge, but appeared under the banner of Joquel's Astra Publications. It carried an explanatory introduction by Bruce Yerke, and consisted of selections of prose poems derived from literary masterworks. These had a strong anti-war bias. Since Joquel was known to be a pacifist, it seems plausible to believe he was responsible for writing as well as publishing them. Their tone certainly does not match Yerke's.

Joquel's last publication was *Sun T(r)ails,* dated October 31, 1941. In this he summarized what he had produced during the year, saying that he doubted any title would be revived because, although he intended to continue reading science-fiction, he was giving up all other fan activities. He reported that he and Asimov had been corresponding, and that they had reconciled their differences. He also added a denigrative note about another fan, which again requires our reviewing some background details.

As has already been noted earlier in this chapter, Charles D. Hornig, who was in charge of three science-fiction magazines, had moved to Los Angeles from the New York area in 1940.* Their publisher, Louis Silberkleit, eventually became dissatisfied with this long-distance editing, and began searching for a successor. He offered the post first to Sam Moskowitz, who declined out of friendship for Hornig, and then to Robert Lowndes, who accepted it. Lowndes took over the editorial reins in early 1941. Why had Hornig chosen to move, and thus risk losing his job? Seemingly the reason was attraction to a LASFS member, Mary Corrine Gray ("Pogo"). She did not reciprocate his attentions, however, allegedly rebuffing him several times. Thereupon he finally declared his unrequited affection publicly in *Hornig's Bulletin,* to which her reaction was distinctly negative.

This somehow aroused Joquel's ire, and he devoted a full page in his *Sun T(r)ails* to castigating Hornig for his attitude and for his "immature" publication. "personally, our sympathies are with Pogo 100%," he wrote, and "We hope that the sympathies of every genuine fan in the country are with her...."

Thus ended Arthur Louis Joquel's sudden flurry of publishing. In only ten months he had produced for his fan audience over two hundred pages of largely interesting and worthwhile material——certainly a respectable total. It has even been reported that he was in the midst of work on a 116-page fanzine when he suddenly abandoned plans for further activity; if so, this was never completed by

Fantasy Commentator IX, 67-69 (1996).

other hands. Nevertheless, Joquel remained a member of the LASFS for several years, and actually edited four issues of its official organ, *Shangri L'Affaires* (#7, December 1942; #8, January 1943; #13, April 1944; and #28, February 1946). He also delivered a talk on Charles Fort at the club's January 14, 1943 meeting, and wrote occasional articles for the fan press during the 1950's. Joquel died of a heart attack at Monterey, California on March 31, 1974 at the age of 60; he had been predeceased by his wife, who died in July of the previous year.

As for Pogo, her main contribution to fandom was editing two issues of *STF-ETTE*, the first feminist fanzine. She planned to have its entire contents and production done by women, although in his brief review of its first (September 1940) issue, Bob Tucker claimed (*Le Zombie*, March and May 1941) that "five males" were actually involved. The second issue, dated July 1941, featured Leigh Brackett's article "Earth's Renaissance," which predicted this would occur with the onset of space travel. Pogo later married Russell M. Wood, thus closing the door on Hornig's aspirations. Hornig eventually married Florence Koch, and still resides in California.

Throughout the new series of *Fantasy Commentator* (1978 to date) Sam was accustomed to sending me installments of this work, and also his "Voyagers Through Eternity," only as fast as I published them. "The Immortal Storm II" breaks off at the point above—part four by chance constituting those few pages not fitting in the previous issue. Sadly, then, there will be no more of this history to come; nor do I know of anyone who has the research files, the memory or the personal interest to continue it. Certainly no one could duplicate Sam's own unique outlook on fandom.

As for "Voyagers," no wordage at all remains in ms.; everything sent me has been printed. But here we may hope for continuation. Sam's notes show that the work was very near its conclusion—only two more chapters remained to be written. His widow is amenable to these being undertaken by someone else, and discussions in that area have already been initiated.

Is there anything else of his left to print? A few short pieces have been found among his papers, and I have a couple more which had been sent me previously. These will duly appear in these pages. Readers will be happy to learn that there also exists in manuscript a completed longer work of about 75,000 words which Sam and I planned to publish here after the conclusion of his "Voyagers." Serialization of it will instead begin in the next issue of *Fantasy Commentator*.

—*Editor.*

●

DISCUSSING DEATH, DEVIANCE AND DINERS / LET SLEEPING LOGS LIE

when the first of the
Chronos-Spheres settled
in Times Square and the
exterminations began
I was eating
vegetarian tagliatelle
complemented by chilled Orvieto
in the pleasing ambience
of the Pizzaria Roma

it was only later
that the disappearances
became apparent, when
the populations of
Seattle, Huddersfield,
Rheims and Rio vanished,
but by then I had
reached the sweet course
choosing profiteroles in
chocolate sauce with
dark cappucino

the Chronos-Spheres, they say,
are now going further back,
ten, twenty years, maybe more
for their murderous sport

the next day
every Italian
on the planet
disappeared

and I had to
eat Cantonese

●

THE MAN WHO DRANK THE MOONS
(LIQUID BUDDHA)

now
that it's all over, within
a year of their detonation,
he brings skeleton shards to her
through the pure swirling song of hydrogen
with Deimos iridescent low above Schiaparelli

and
as if the moons are ice
they melt and run in tears
down the planes of his face

the
wing-dolphin glides through
hails of low-grav particles
and he protrudes like a fin
from its sleek shoulder, but
drawn by the lure of her breath
he settles where the enchanted city
wears its silence in freezing robes
dragging its lunar face across
landscapes of glowing desert

it is
raining moons when Thorval
comes to the cities of Mars through
the pure swirling song of hydrogen,
and now that the terror is over
within a year of their detonation
he brings to her blades of ice
from their core, so she can
cut them, and together
share blood

—*Andrew Darlington*

Sources of Inspiration?

Weinbaum's Shirt Pocket Library

Eric Leif Davin

Despite the fact that Stanley G. Weinbaum was a college drop-out, it is evident from his fiction that he was literate and well read. Indeed, he was perhaps one of the most literate science-fiction writers of the pulp era. For the the most part his development seems that of a confident and assured autodidact.

From an early age he is described as being an omniverous reader and as having a wide-ranging curiosity. His widow, Margaret Weinbaum Kay, remembers how he "blew up the family basement with his chemical experiments" as a boy, and how he wrote prolifically as a college studemt at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.[1]* "The head of the English Department loved him," she recalls, and much, perhaps most, of his writing at that time was poetry. Many of his poems were published in the undergraduate literary review, though his student notebooks contain a number of others which were not. These poems, though written by a chemistry major, already reflect a literary taste which is informed by an increasing scientific knowledge.[2]

She also tells us that his novel *The New Adam* was begun in pocket notebooks he carried with him as a chemical salesman in 1926. While waiting in various anterooms as he made his rounds, Weinbaum took advantage of what otherwise might have been wasted time to write segments of this novel.[3] These notebooks had already been used for his college course notes——he was using up the remaining blank pages——so we can get a glimpse of what he was reading then. In one, for the academic year 1920-1921, we see what his assignments in English were. For Wednesday, January 21st, for example, he made a note to read Hardy's "Thunder and Lightning." For February 16th, he planned to read "The Brookes Sisters." And on March 7th he was to read the introduction of Wordsworth's poems, as edited by Matthew Arnold, as well as the poem "On Going A-Journeying." He continued reading Wordsworth for the rest of March, followed by Oliver Goldsmith's essays and Thomas de Quincey's "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth.*"

That is as far as the reading schedule goes. Immediately after the crossed-out notation "Friday, quiz on Wordsworth," *The New Adam* begins. Weinbaum's college career came to an end in his junior year; he was suspended for a semester for having written a classmate's paper. Even then his confidence in his literary ability was in evidence: Mrs. Kay says he was insulted when the authorities compared the writing in this paper to Zane Grey's. He could have returned to the university after his suspension, but declined to do so, opting instead for a life and literary career in the outside world.

Once in that wider world, however, and left to his own devices, what were Weinbaum's sources of inspiration, especially for his science-fiction stories? Trying to answer that question is essentially a guessing-game, but some intriguing possibilities do present themselves.

His widow recalls that they attended lectures and lectures as regularly as they could. It was at one of these that they met his future collaborator on the never-published *What's It All About?*, the psychologist Edward Schoolman. It was at another that they met Dr. Eugene Kay, a German-Jewish physician who became

*Notes for this article are on pp. 139-140.

great friends with them, and who married Margaret after her husband's death.

In addition to such lectures, Weinbaum had a small scientific library of his own that he frequently consulted. Mrs. Kay recalled that the gigantic caterpillar-like creatures of Uranus in "The Planet of Doubt" (*Astounding Stories*, October 1935) were inspired by his reading an English translation of Jean Henri Fabre's classic ten-volume set *Souvenirs Entomologiques*. She also remembered that John George W. Woods's *Natural History* was always on his desk when he wrote. But what other books were there? What else did he read?

Heretofore there have been no answers to these questions. That situation is now changed with the access to materials in Weinbaum's literary estate in a trunk left with his widow at his death. Sam Moskowitz has previously described his business correspondence found there.[4] I shall now discuss what remains of his "research library," also from that trunk. I shall suggest a few tentative connections, and invite readers to extrapolate on their own as well.

Weinbaum's small library comprises 21 volumes, all copyrighted 1922-27, of E. Haldeman-Julius's famous "Little Blue Books." From the identifying stamp on some of them we may infer Weinbaum purchased them locally at Hampel's Book Shop in Milwaukee. These once ubiquitous booklets were mass-produced by the millions in the early years of the century, but today are seldom-seen collectors' items.

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius (1889-1951) began publishing the Little Blue Books in Gerard, Kansas after he purchased the *Appeal to Reason* in 1919. The *Appeal* was an independent weekly socialist newspaper in Gerard whose nationwide circulation, at its peak, was over 760,000. From 1895 to 1922 it was the foremost socialist publication in America, and was closely affiliated with the Socialist Party, seeking to convert readers to its cause with plain English and good writing. It printed essays, fiction and reporting by such radical notables as Marx, Engels, Karl Kautsky and Eugene V. Debs, but also work by such literary figures as Charles Dickens, William Dean Howells, Jack London, William Morris and Upton Sinclair.

In the "Red Scare" which followed World War I, however, the *Appeal* was banned from the mails and suffered a precipitous decline as the Socialist Party, The Industrial Workers of the World and many other radical organiztions which had formed its support network were hounded out of existence. Thereupon Haldeman-Julius turned to another venue for "uplifting the masses." Just as the venerable Chautauqua movement had formerly taken education to the hinterlands with travelling caravans, so did he attempt the same through publishing.

His first venture in this direction was a set of fifty literary and socialistic classics inexpensively produced as paperbound booklets. Intended to be read in spare moments, they were all three and a half by five inches in size so they could fit into a shirt pocket and sold for five dollars per set. They were advertised in the *Appeal*.

Although originally available only by mail-order, reader response was great, and after the *Appeal* folded in 1922 Haldeman-Julius expanded his offerings. First he began by selling titles singly for ten cents each. Then, in 1923, he changed their name from the "People's Pocket Series" to the "Little Blue Books," after the color of their covers. At the same time he began to print more original works than classics, although the works of Shakespeare and the atheist orator Robert G. Ingersoll were always kept in print. Otherwise, if a volume sold fewer than ten thousand copies annually it would be discontinued.

While he published popular joke-books, how-to manuals and straightforward historical, scientific and philosophical works, he also continued to issue works consistent with the political origins of the series. Thus titles by birth control advocate Margaret Sanger could be found on his list, along with those of veteran Populist Kate Richards O'Hare, W. E. B. DuBois, Clarence Darrow, Upton Sinclair, Bertrand Russell and such newcomers as James T. Farrell, whose first work appeared as a Little Blue Book. Haldeman-Julius continued publishing until his death in 1951, by which time he had put 2,203 titles into print.


LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 39
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
A Guide to Aristotle
Will Durant, Ph. D.
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1030
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
The World's Great Religions
Joseph McCabe
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1210
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
A Book of Mathematical Oddities
Clement Wood
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 493
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
New Discoveries in Science
Hereward Carrington, Ph. D.
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 851
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
Sources of Bible Myths and Legends
Maynard Shipley
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 609
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
Are the Planets Inhabited?
Maynard Shipley
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 557
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
Is the Moon a Dead World?
Maynard Shipley
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1000
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
The Wonders of Radium
Maynard Shipley
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 592
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
The Millennium
A Comedy of the Year 2000
Volume III
UPTON SINCLAIR
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 301
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
Sailor Chanties and Cowboy Songs
Charles J. Finger
NAMPEL'S BOOK SHOP
211 WELLS ST.
MILWAUKEE, WIS.
HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS
LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 150
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
Lost Civilizations
Charles J. Finger

Some of these wound up on Stanley Weinbaum's desk. These Little Blue Books fall into eight categories: entertainment, philosophy, psychology, myth and religion, history, literature, science and astronomy. Let's take a look at them.

Entertainment

There are four books in this category. The first is *Sailor Chanties and Cowboy Songs* by Charles J. Finger, copyrighted in 1923 and identified on the title page as "Ten Cent Pocket Series no. 301." The author writes that the idea for the collection came when he and the rest of his crew were shipwrecked on Tierra del Fuego. They kept their spirits up, he says, by singing bawdy sailors' songs.

Party Games for Grown-Ups by Gloria Goddard (1927, Little Blue Book no. 1239) contains not only such standard ones as charades, but numerous "question games" requiring knowledge of literature, history, mythology and so on. "Famous Sevens" seems one Weinbaum would have done well at. Among other questions it asks, "Who wrote a celebrated poem entitled 'We Are Seven'?" He would have had no trouble answering "Wordsworth." Nor should he have had any in identifying the Septentriones as "the seven stars of a group in the Dipper."

George Milburn's *Book of Puzzles and Brainteasers* (1926, no. 1103) contains anagrams, "enigmas," charades and miscellaneous puzzles, such as "Galileo's Logograph"; while Clement Wood's *Book of Mathematical Oddities* (1927, no. 1210) is composed entirely of mathematical puzzles. The latter may be an origin of Weinbaum's story "The Brink of Infinity," which is based on a mathematical puzzle. Wood's book ends with a discussion of the fourth dimension, and asks if there is any way it may be visualized. "There is only one easy way," he says, "the way indicated by H. G. Wells in his brilliant novelette of twenty years ago, *The Time Machine*, and developed by Ouspensky in his fragmentarily brilliant philosophical work, *Tertium Organum*, based on Einstein's mathematics. For these two authorities the fourth dimension is Time."[5]

Philosophy

Both of the two books in this category are by "Will Durant, Ph.D." Famous now as the author of *The Story of Philosophy*, Durant is identified in the first of these, *A Guide to Aristotle* (1923, no. 39), as the director of New York City's Labor Temple, a "workers' college" of that day. It is a straightforward biography and exposition of Aristotle's works, as is the other book, *The Story of Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy* (1924, no. 19). Nietzsche is cited in Weinbaum's novel *The New Adam*; but the long discussions between Oscar and the two humans in his story "The Lotus Eaters" (*Astounding Stories*, April 1935) suggest that he must have owned or read still other philosophical works.

Psychology

There are also two psychology texts in Weinbaum's shirt pocket library. We know, as mentioned above, that with Edward Schoolman he invested much time and energy on a book that was to discuss various psychological problems as these were exhibited by Schoolman's anonymous patients. It seems quite possible that he prepared for the collaboration with these works. One is Daniel H. Bonus's *Associa-Tests Used in Psycho-Analysis* (1925, no. 784), which discusses Jung's experimental validation of several Freudian theories. The other is a look at Freud himself in Anton S. Booker's *Freud on Sleep and Sexual Dreams* (1925, no. 804).

Myth and Religion

Weinbaum had four Haldeman-Julius works debunking religion. While she and her husband were both Jews, Mrs. Kay has told us that they were religious non-believers, so it is no surprise to find such titles in his library. Two of them are by Joseph McCabe. The first is *The Origin of Religion* (1926, no. 1008). Its thrust may be summarized by the conclusion: "Religion for ages was a matter of bread and butter.... It had, in the overwhelming majority of cases, nothing whatever to do with morals. Right up to the threshold of civilization, for ninety-five thousand

out of a hundred thousand years, it was a colossal illusion, imposture, waste of time and resources, and a source of endless terror."

Of a similar nature is McCabe's *The World's Great Religions* (1926, no. 1030). In it he examines the religions of ancient Egypt, Babylon, China, India, the Americas, Persia, Palestine, Greece and Rome, and outlines the rise of Christianity. Of all these he says: "The history of religion is not so much a history of ideas as of priesthoods. The ideas are incorporated in wealthy and powerful organizations of priests, and it is, naturally, these who fight for them, and it is they who resent the idea of progress. Revelation is the most fatally obstructive idea that ever entered the mind of man, and it was obviously put there by priests."

Self-Contradictions of the Bible (no. 97) is a compilation of contradictory Biblical passages grouped under such headings as theological doctrines, moral precepts and historical facts.

Maynard Shipley's *Sources of Bible Myths and Legends* (1925, no. 831) was no doubt written before the Scopes Monkey Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, but it begins by attacking William Jennings Bryan anyway. Shipley quotes an anti-evolutionist speech Bryan gave before the West Virginia legislature in 1923 and goes on to debunk Bryan's Fundamentalist crusade in such chapters as "Who Wrote the Pentateuch?", "The Creation and Fall of Man" and "The Deluge and the Tower of Babel."

History

There are three historical works in Weinbaum's library. Two are companion volumes by Leo Markun. The first of these is *Prostitution in the Ancient World* (1925, no. 286). Here Markun discusses prostitution among the Greeks and Romans and "the primitive races," as well as homosexual prostitution in general. The sequel is *Prostitution in the Medieval World* (1926, no. 1111). In it he treats prostitution in Medieval England, France and Germany, while giving full weight to "Christian influences." The third title is by Charles J. Finder, an author already cited above, *Lost Civilizations* (1922, 150). Here he knowledgably and entertainingly explores the civilizations of ancient China and India-Ceylon, the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Arabs, Persians, Aztecs and Incas.

Literature

Here we have two compatible literary works for a poetic science-fiction writer. The first is an appreciative essay by Robert Louis Stevenson, *François Villon: Student, Poet and Housebreaker* (no date, no. 293). The second is volume III of a political science-fiction novel by Upton Sinclair, *The Millennium: a Comedy of the Year 2000* (1924, no. 592). This is a rather turgid "comedy," in which Prohibitionists still found Anti-Saloon Leagues and the principals speak in Victorian tones. The main action centers around the struggle between "the former mistress of society, Mrs. Viviana Athlestan de Smithkins Lumley-Gotham," who has become an aristocratic revolutionary, and President Tuttle of the Amalgamated Food Tablet Companies, the greatest capitalist in the year 2000. All ends happily, however, with the death of Tuttle and a triumphant world-wide socialist revolution.[6]

Science

Other than astronomy, Weinbaum owned two Little Blue Books dealing with science. One was *New Discoveries in Science* (1924, no. 493) by Hereward Carrington, Ph. D. This covers an uneasy mix of authentic and dubious concepts. Among the latter are "Your Aura, and What It Is" and experiments and transplantation of ape glands into humans "in a search for an 'Elixir of Life'." Other sections, however, deal more prosaically with the fourth dimension, relativity, gravitation, tests to show the presence of life, "light without heat," "Soap Bubbles and What They Teach Us," the source of the sun's heat, the origin of comets and the Earth, and the question of whether or not Mars is inhabited. After discussing the temperature, atmosphere and the possibility of water existing on the planet Dr. Car-

rington concludes, "It is probable that life on Mars might be possible."

The other book, by Maynard Shipley, is *The Wonders of Radium* (1926, no. 1000). Although written in a time when watches with radium dials and things like radium fish-bait were still thought to be wonderful ideas, it is otherwise an accurate enough discussion of the properties and possible uses of radium. Considering that Weinbaum died of lung cancer and underwent unsuccessful radiation treatment for it, the chapter "Radiation in the Treatment of Cancer" is indeed poignant. Here we are told that "The only way to stop the ravages of cancer ... is to diagnose it early——in time for operation ....it has been amply demonstrated that radium treatment increases the permanency of the results obtained by surgery, and often converts inoperable into operable cases .... [A]s a relief measure in the late and hopeless stages of the disease, radium prolongs life, relieves pain and adds much to the comfort of the victim."

Weinbaum's stories show clearly that hewas familiar with radium and radioactivity. The life-forms of "Proteus Island" are a riot of mutations caused by radiation——which also causes cancer in the wife of the scientist responsible for this experiment run amok. In "A Martian Odyssey" the hero discovers a radioactive stone which may be a cure for cancer. Both "The Adaptive Ultimate" and "Parasite Planet" deal with variants of cancer.

Margaret Kay, however, tells us that neither she nor his doctors ever informed Weinbaum that he was dying of lung cancer. Further, in letters to various correspondents, he himself refers rather vaguely to "some sort of imitation pneumonia as a complication from the tonsil extraction,"[7] and says that the X-ray treatments he was receiving in the hospital regularly "shoot the devil out of you."[8] His knowledge about cancer and its treatment by radiation, however, raise questions about the state of his ignorance concerning hismedical condition. Could he *really* have believed that this debilitating and expensive radiation treatment was merely for "some sort of imitation pneumonia"? We can only speculate.

Astronomy

The last two books in Weinbaum's shirt pocket library are also by Maynard Shipley. In the first of these, *Is the Moon a Dead World?* (1924, no. 557) he discusses various topographical features of the Moon, "evidence of lunar snow and ice" and "volcanic activity on the Moon during modern times," as well as the possibility of lunar vegetation. He concludes, however, that while it might once have had inhabitants, it is now an abandoned stage whose actors have departed.

Even more interesting is Shipley's *Are the Planets Inhabited?* (1924, no. 609). Sounding like an early Carl Sagan, he writes, "[O]ut yonder, in every direction, from one to three thousand million ... suns are flying at great speeds through the endless spaces,——many of them, perhaps, carrying with them their own families of planets——some, it may be, inhabited by intelligent beings."

Of our own solar system, Shipley speculates that one or two planets may yet remain undiscovered beyond the orbit of Neptune,[9] and then surveys each of the eight known planets in turn. "While we are not prepared to say that the existence of living organisms on the planet Mercury is utterly impossible," he begins, "nevertheless there are several reasons which militate against the view that it may be inhabited." Venus, though, must surely have evolved "certain vegetable organisms——prototrophic bacteria——which do not require either free oxygen or organic substances for their origin or sustenance" because of its "abundance of water and ammonium salts, along with carbon dioxide." Additionally, "if there are intelligent inhabitants of Venus they must be inured to wet weather, for the climate must be warm and dripping, or misty, all the time ...."[10]

Jupiter's "state of evolution," he concludes, "is inconsistent with life-supporting conditions" although "Undoubtedly, lower forms of life may exist in abundance on [its moons Ganymede and Io], as well as on the fourth satellite, Cal-

listo ...." As with Jupiter, Shipley dismisses the possibility of life on the gas giant Saturn, although adding that its moon Titan "*may* possess sufficient atmosphere of a nature suitable for the sustenance of many of the higher forms of life. However, if we can judge by analogy with the Earth and its inhabitants, it is safer to assume that only lowly organisms really exist on this satellite."

He also doubts the existence of even simple life forms on the gas planets Uranus and Neptune, although he adds that the well known astronomer "Mr. Garrett P. Serviss suggests that a gaseous planet might be inhabited by gaseous living beings! Says he:

> "They would approach in constitution 'disembodied spirits,' or ghosts, being composed of inexplicable colligations of gaseous atoms, taking the place of the bones, muscles and tissues that form the subjects of our anatomical and physiological studies ....
>
> "A company of Neptunians might be as iridescent as a flight of soap-bubbles!
>
> "A floating Uranian, or Neptunian, of an organization that we should regard as ethereal, rather than material .... a creature as beautiful, as untouchable (by our gross hands), and apparently as evanescent as a rainbow, could still exceed in powers of comprehension and capacity for enjoyment the greatest genius and the most exquisitely organized Epicurian that ever appeared in the coarse mortal vestures of the Earth."[11]
>
> All of which [Shipley reminds us] we must, alas, remember, is purely imaginary!

Mars is saved for a last, exhaustive discussion. Based on observations of the planet performed at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, Shipley concludes there is "positive evidence that the changes in the canals and other dark markings . . . require vegetation for their satisfactory explanation." Beyond that, quoting the astronomer Earl C. Slipher (considered then the foremost expert on Mars), he suggests there is also animal life, since "plant and animal life come from the same original stock. From these facts, we should expect the coeval existence of them on a planet, and if, as it appears in the case, Mars possesses plant life, then we cannot, it seems, exclude animal life." Shipley also quotes the "American scientist B. McAfee" as saying, "'I am convinced that life exists on Mars and expect to prove it.'"

"Let us trust his expectation will be fulfilled," concludes Shipley, adding that he believes either Marconi or Edison will be able to project waves directly at Mars or Venus in the near future. In fact, "Edison has expressed the belief that the inhabitants of some heavenly body are even now trying to communicate with us, and has predicted that wireless from planet to planet will be an accomplished fact within the next few years."

Or perhaps they have already communicated with us, as Weinbaum speculated in "A Martian Odyssey." Tweel, after all, was the descendent of creatures who had visited Earth long before, and who had become the model for the ancient Egyptian god Thoth. Weinbaum knew all about it——hadn't he read Joseph McCabe's *The World's Great Religions*, Little Blue Book number 1030?

NOTES

(1) See her recollections in my interview with her, "Remembering Stanley Weinbaum," *Fantasy Commentator VII*, 78ff. (1991).

(2) For examples, see "Last Citizen of Earth" (*Fantasy Commentator VII*, 125 [1991]) and "The Road to Hell," on p. 153 of this issue. The latter is from his college notebook for the 1920-21 school year.

(3) "Remembering Stanley Weinbaum," p. 82. These jottings were not merely notes, but completed passages. Weinbaum aeems to have been a one-draft writer, as Mrs. Kay maintained (*ibid.*, p. 96). His hand-written mss. and pocket notebooks for *The New Adam* bear this out, displaying the same text later published. (See ms. reproductions, pp. 153-156.)

In "The Marketing of Stanley G. Weinbaum" (*Fantasy Commentator VII*, 112) Sam Moskowitz claims that *The New Adam* was begun in late 1934. This is inconsistent with his wife's account. Neither does it seem reasonable that Weinbaum would have written any of this novel (as he did) in old school notebooks in 1934, when he was working full-time at home. At that time he had access to ample scratch paper Margaret brought home from her newspaper job. Indeed, every other surviving ms. he wrote at this time is on this scratch paper. I suggest, therefore, that the genesis of *The New Adam* is at least eight years earlier, in 1926. It may, of course, have been dropped and then returned to later, when Weinbaum's letter mentions working on it.

(4) Moskowitz, *op. cit.*

(5) *The Time Machine* was first published in book form in 1889. "Twenty years ago" would put this essay at 1908-09, although Einstein did not publish his general theory of relativity until 1915. Perhaps Wood is simply off on his estimate of when Wells's novel was published.

(6) This work was originally written in 1907 as a play (though it was never produced), and did not appear in hard covers until 1929. For a synopsis of the entire work see Everett F. Bleiler's *Science-Fiction / the Early Years* (1990), pp. 636-637.

(7) Letters, Weinbaum to Julius Schwartz, July 10 and August 6, 1935.

(8) Letter, Weinbaum to Schwartz, October 14, 1935.

(9) Clyde Tombaugh discovered the planet Pluto in 1930.

(10) We know now that there is no water at all on Venus, and that its temperature is much higher.

(11) Could Serviss's remarks have been inspired by the earlier Conan Doyle tale "The Horror of the Heights" (1913)?

• • • •

Book Reviews

ALTERNATIVE ALICES / VISIONS AND REVISIONS / OF / LEWIS CARROLL's *ALICE* BOOKS / AN ANTHOLOGY edited by Carolyn Sigler. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. xxiii-391 pp. 24.2 cm. $34.00 (hardbound), $20.00 (softbound).

Carolyn Sigler of Kansas State University has assembled fifteen pieces of children's literature purportedly influenced by the *Alice* books, together with five propagandistic pastiches based on *Alice*. They range from Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy* (1869) to Edward Hope's *Alice in the Delighted States* (1928). Some of the shorter pieces are complete, but excerpts are more the rule. Most of the authors are now forgotten, although Christina Rossetti, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Edith Nesbit, Howard Garis, E. F. Benson and Saki are still remembered.

What has this selection to do with *Alice*? In most cases, very little—even nothing at all. While Sigler offers a list of criteria for a Carroll pastiche, many of her choices do not embody these criteria, but are simply Victorian children's fantasies. *Mopsa the Fairy*, for example, has much more to do with *Phantastes* (1858) by George MacDonald (whose work Sigla ignores) than with *Alice*.

The author's theoretical background is a sort of feminist evolutionism. She regards the *Alice* books as opening the publishing door for women writers, who could now publish what they otherwise might have only told their children. This suggests that she is unaware of the amount of popular fiction that women wrote in the middle and late nineteenth century, without Lewis Carroll.

Sigler states that the *Alice* sort of fantasy permitted recognition of the positive aspects of femininity. Unfortunately her texts do not support this. What she considers "subverting the ideological assumptions behind Carroll's *Alice* books" seems to this reader very ordinary. At times it is not going too far to call Sigler's interpretation wrong-headed: In Juliana Ewing's "Amelia and the Dwarfs" she calls Amelia "powerful and aggressive" (in a positive sense), whereas other readers might well see her as a most obnoxious child, what with social disruption and deliberately injuring animals.

Sigler also offers a chronological-typological structure, beginning with "subverting Wonderland," working through didacticism, to sentimental re-creation. Unfortunately, subversion seems mute, didacticism does not teach, and sentiment belongs more to the earlier works.

The final group offers segments of pastiches with political or economic points: Saki's *Westminster Alice* (1900-1902), Caroline Lewis's *Clara in Blunderland* (1907), among others. Here annotation is deperately needed, for this could be potentially the most interesting part of the book. It is not enough to say that Saki's work (a bore) was concerned with the Boer War. A collection of good

Alice pastiches, like Horace Wyatt's World War I propaganda *Malice in Kulturland*, the so-called "Guinness Alice," or even parts of P. Schuyler Miller's science-fictional *Alice in Blunderland*, suitably annotated, would be useful, but it remains to be done.

Sigler's book has little to offer as a scholarly work, and unfortunately even less as entertainment. The Victorian material is mostly dismal. However, Maggie Brown's *Wanted—a King* (1890), which is obviously based more on Grimm and English fairy tales than on Carroll, has some odd, mythic material anticipatory of Tolkein. Edith Nesbit's "Justnowland" (1912) is nicely written. Surprisingly, the excerpt from George Farrow's *The Wallypug of Why* (1895) might lead one to read more, while Howard Garis's *Uncle Wiggily in Wonderland* fragments (1916) are fine for children. Bangs's pastiche has more meat than is usual in his work. The rest of the book can well be ignored.

Everett F. Bleiler

H. P. LOVECRAFT: A LIFE by S. T. Joshi. West Warwick, R. I.: Necronomicon Press, 1996. xii-704 pp. 22.5 cm. $35.00 (hardbound), $20.00 (softbound).

S. T. Joshi has written a long, learned and interesting biography of Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It is a fascinating book for anyone curious either about the man or the field of weird fiction generally. Joshi covers Lovecraft's ancestry, childhood and early seclusion; his tales, poems and letters; his marriage, friends and admirers; his travels and his involvement in the amateur journalism movement. He deals with HPL's personal philosophy, peculiarities and moral character, and his painful death in 1937. The last chapter provides a strong, scholarly summary of Lovecraft's achievement and place in literary history.

Joshi's analyses of Lovecraft's short stories are very well done and always illuminating. They comprise one of the highlights of this biography, for the author brings to them a wealth of knowledge about HPL's life and theories of weird fiction. Another highlight is Joshi's presentation of HPL's atheistic materialism and "cosmicism"—his views on the place of man in the cosmos. Lovecraft's basic metaphysical opinions are explained thoroughly in a clear style. Joshi himself seems to have adopted the same metaphysical views as his subject, and this, I think, has diminished somewhat his otherwise finely-tuned objectivity as an analyst. But Joshi does admit, and affirms, all (or almost all) the flaws in HPL's chaacter, as well as the mistakes he made. Thus his treatment of the marriage with Sonia Greene, with all its emotional overtones and complexities, is excellent. This book is more comprehensive and scholarly than de Camp's 1975 bio graphy. Only in one way is it a shade less good: its handling of HPL's sad limitations.

The impression one receives from this hefty volume is that Lovecraft possessed many weak characteristics, but also some good traits. He dropped out of high school (never to get a diploma); he suffered four minor nervous breakdowns in early life; he never prepared himself for a profession, and consequently never held a professional position—or even a regular job of any kind, except as a ticket-taker at a theater for a short time. Sam Moskowitz has realistically noted that he was actually a pauper in his last years, living on only a few dollars a week. Perhaps one of the worst things that ever happened to Lovecraft was receiving a small legacy early in life; this allowed him to coast along and, because of his inertia, nibble at the material goods of life just enough to get along.

Another weakness was his inflated notion that he was a "New England gentleman," which enabled him to hold normal life at bay and retreat from certain forms of employment. The incredible fact is that with only, say, fifteen dollars a week more than he was eking out of sales to *Weird Tales* and the revisions of others' work, Lovecraft could have attained a healthier diet, better clothing

and medical treatment. But he wouldn't work for any extra money. Indeed, for years this gentleman seriously contemplated suicide should his funds finally run out.

As a young man, from 1908 to 1913, Lovecraft lived too much alone with his mother——yet he never did very much to support her, or, in later years, his aunt Annie Phillips Gamwell. His marriage was a failure; furthermore, he shamefully allowed his aunts to dictate how he should deal with his wife Sonia's offer to support him (and them) in Providence. In effect, he sent Sonia packing.

Lovecraft's racist views are well known; his letters to friends contain sustained, vile and shocking statements against various minorities——the "vermin." These letters present truly appalling and ferocious attitudes; they drip with venom. HPL also revealed a sneering, contemptuous attitude toward religious people and their beliefs. Then, too, consider his misanthropy——that bitter, cynical dismissal of the entire human race as pathetic, insignificant, irrational and meaningless. This misanthropy is often brushed under the table (or even praised) as, after all, "cosmicism"——as if that excused it. Lovecraft was also capable of voicing such scalding opinions to close associates. Yet he was also capable of writing fine horror stories.

In view of the great following and affection he enjoys today within the science-fiction and weird fiction community (and even the reverence which he has often received), it troubles me that, even apart from his social opinions, he remained in so many areas an amateur. Lovecraft was an amateur in astronomy, philosophy, history, anthropology, general science and even in the art of writing itself. (One prominent critic said recently, "I wish he had learned to write better.") He never considered himself a professional writer, and rarely took a professional approach to the business of writing——and it *is* a business.

He held no college degree. Where are his published academic papers and lectures? Yes, he read some good books in science, but that doesn't get one beyond amateurdom. How much did he read in philosophy? I have taught in this field for thirty years, and I see no evidence that he was familiar with its long and complex history. Joshi writes that Lovecraft thought Darwin had "demolished" the philosophical argument from design for the existence of God. Yet Lovecraft seems

(continued on page 148)

• • •

PERPETUAL MOTION

The planet turns beneath you, yet
No motion transmits to your feet;
It also orbits round the sun
And does not bother anyone.
Once, the ground was held to be
The one fixed point, quite stationary
As round it whirled the heavenly sphere:
If Earth revolved then that idea
Meant the spinning would have hurled
Everything right off the world.
Now we know that all's in flight——
Sun, Moon and each star in sight;
The Milky Way itself will take
Two hundred million years to make
Just one enormous Cosmic Year——
Yet this fact causes us no fear.
What does bring terror is the thought
Of that one moment which is brought
To stasis by life's final end;
Our forward trip through time is planned
As one-way, finite: an eerie notion
Of motionless perpetual motion.

——*John Francis Haines*

A WOMAN CAST IN STONE

She sits all alone in a palace of stone
on a planet that circles a dying red sun.

Unlike her sad sisters who soon became crones,
whose bodies are dust and a shovel of bones,

she fashions her youth from a series of clones
who feed in the darkness until they are done.

Her suitors are fiends who seek only to own
——not her life, not her mind, not her soul——

but the secret she holds in the bastion of stone
that keeps age at bay while the centuries run.

Friends are long dead, her name is unknown,
her world is a barren one all sane men shun.

Her beauty's a sin she cannot atone,
her days are far empty, her passions undone.

She sits all alone in a palace of stone
like an unchanging sculpture of obsidian.

Chill to the bone, she feels the sky moan,
and she waits for the death of the sun.

——*Bruce Boston*

ROBERT AICKMAN:
A Bibliography

Gary William Crawford

INTRODUCTION

This compilation should be regarded as an intermediate bibliography, supplementing my preliminary checklist printed in *Nyctalops* #18 (1983). It is intended as preparation for a more comprehensive work. Excluded are the largest part of Aickman's non-fiction writings, which comprise reviews and articles in various waterways magazines he edited during his lifetime that have little or nothing to do with fantasy. As can be seen, several entries are incomplete, and additions and corrections are invited; please address these to me at 4998 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, Louisana 70808-3043.

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"The Trains" in: *The Fontana Book of Great Ghost Stories* (*vide supra*). *No Such Thing as a Vampire*, ed. Frederick Pickersgill; London: Corgi, 1964.

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V. MANUSCRIPTS

Nearly all of Robert Aickman's existing letters, manuscripts, notebooks, journals and various writings are housed at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Some letters, including several from his friends in the years after his death, are in the possession of the present bibliographer.

SECONDARY REFERENCES

VI. ARTICLES, BOOKS, ESSAYS, THESES AND DISSERTATIONS ABOUT AICKMAN

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——: "The Strange World of Robert Aickman: a Retrospective," in *Horrorstruck 2*, #2 (1988), 33-36. A fairly solid appreciation aimed at the general reader.

Briggs, Scott D.: "Robert Aickman: Sojourns into the Unknown," in *Studies in Weird Fiction* #12 (1993), 7-12. Explores Aickman's strange journeys to realms of the unconscious.

Clute, Jonn: "Robert Aickman," in *Supernatural Fiction Writers: Fantasy and Horror*, ed. E. F. Bleiler (2 vol.); New York: Scribner's, 1985, 957-964. A survey of Aickman's fiction.

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——: Untitled entry in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, ed. Clute and John Grant; New York: St. Martin's, 1997, 12. A brief descriptiom of Aickman's fiction which emphasizes its quality (he "was perhaps the finest writer of the ghost story in the second half of the 20th century") and its psychic overtones.

Cotton, Leona D.: *Robert Aickman's "Strange Stories" and Freud's Theory of the "Uncanny"*, M. A. thesis, Marshall University, 1989.

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——: "The Poetics of the Unconscious: The 'Strange Stories' of Robert Aickman" in *Discovering Modern Horror Fiction II*, ed. Darrell Schweitzer; Mercer Island, Wash.: Starmont House, 1988, 43-50. A survey arguing that Aickman drew the poetic quality of his tales from his own subconscious, and that as Fritz Leiber has noted he is "the weatherman of the subconscious."

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——: "Robert Fordyce Aickman" in *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural*; New York: Viking, 1986, 1-2. A brief biocritical entry which notes the subtlety of Aickman's tales.

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Dingwall, Eric J., Goldney, Kathleen M. and Hall, Trevor H.: *The Haunting of Borley Rectory*; London: Duckworth, 1956.

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Joshi, S. T.: "So Little Is Definite" in *Million* #12 (Nov.-Dec. 1992), 15-22. An opinionated, shallow approach to Aickman, which berates him for having no well thought-out theory of ghostly fiction, and for not being a philosopher. This narrow assessment looks at him through the point of view of H. P. Lovecraft, from whose point of view he might indeed seem a little strange.

——: "Robert Aickman: 'So Little Is Definite'" in *Studies in Weird Fiction* #18 (1996), 22-23. A slightly revised version of the above.

Morris, Christine Pasanen: "The Female 'Outsider' in the Short Fiction of Robert Aickman" in *Nyctalops* #18 (1983), 55-58 A good approach to Aickman from a feminist standpoint.

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Ricketts, Martin: "Enigma Macabre: An Evaluation of the Short Stories of Robert Aickman" in *Voices from Shadow*, ed. David Sutton; Birmingham, England: Shadow Publishing, 1994, 7-14. An assessment of Aickman for the general reader.

VII. REVIEWS OF AICKMAN'S BOOKS

The Attempted Rescue in: *The Observer* (22 May 1966), 27; *Punch 250* (15 June 1966), 27; *Times Literary Supplement* (2 June 1966), 500.
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The Model in: *Booklist 83* (15 Apr. 1987), 1252; *Books 3* (Apr. 1989), 13; *Book World 17* (29 March 1987), 10; *Fantasy Review 10* (April 1987), 31; *Kirkus Reviews 55* (1 Mar. 1987), 316; *Library Journal 112* (15 Apr. 1987), 103; *Publisher's Weekly 231* (20 March 1987), 71; *Science Fiction Chronicle 8* (July 1987), 48.
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Tales of Love and Death in: *Times Literary Supplement* (23 Dec. 1977), 1513.
The Wine-Dark Sea in: *Bloomsbury Review 85* (Sep. 1988), 13; *Booklist 85* (15 Oct. 1988), 363; *Books 3* (Mar. 1990), 18; *Book Watch 10* (Feb. 1989), 6; *Book World 18* (11 Dec. 1988), 9; *Kirkus Reviews 56* (1 Sep. 1988), 1256; *Library Journal 113* (15 Oct. 1988), 106; *Publisher's Weekly 234* (19 Aug. 1988), 58; *Science Fiction Chronicle 10* (Apr. 1989), 40.

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Book Reviews——continued from page 142

unaware of the scholarly history of this argument found in Aquinas, Hume, Paley, Gilson, the scholastics and others. Is Joshi aware of the recent books written by biologists (not Fundamentalists) challenging Darwin? Michael Denton's *Evolution: a Theory in Crisis,* for example. He doesn't mention them. It is strange that in some quarters HPL is seen as a God-like sage, when in fact he was a high-school drop-out who spent much of his short life in amateur journalism, writing fantasy and science-fiction and far too many personal letters for his own good.

The positive side of his character, which is brought foreward by Joshi, includes the fact that despite his racism HPL dealt fairly and kindly with people no matter what their ethnic make-up. He was ever the courteous man who generously corresponded with both friends and strangers, helping them by patiently answering their questions, reading and critiquing their often inept manuscripts, rewriting their bad prose and poetry, and furthering their careers. Too much has been made of HPL's fondness for architecture and cats; we ought to remember that he responded warmly to many people in his life. How does one reconcile the vitriolic racism, irreligion and pride of English ancestry that Lovecraft displayed with his undeniable kindness and generosity in dealing with individuals? The way he wrote and spoke to intimates was not the way he acted in society. His words were shocking; his actions good. Better this way than the reverse, in any event.

Edward W. O'Brien, Jr.

A COMPLETE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF S-F BOOKS, 1946-1970, edited by Fujio Ishihara, Ph. D. Kanagawa, Japan, 1996. Two volumes, 1623 pp. 26.0 cm. ¥18,500 (*ca.* $148). A COMPLETE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF S-F BOOKS, 1971-1980, edited by Fujio Ishihara, Ph. D. Kanagawa, Japan, 1996. Three volumes, 2337 pp. 26.0 cm. ¥49,000 (*ca.* $390).

These two compilations of science-fiction printed in Japan are actually a single collective work, even though they comprise seven volumes and nearly 4000 continuously numbered pages. Their publisher is not clear to my American eyes, although it seems to be the publisher of the Japanese science-fiction magazine *SF*, since its colophon appears on the title pages and its editor, Kiyoshi Imaoka, has contributed an introduction to the second volume. Both books are sturdily (if unusually) bound in canvas.

An earlier, less comprehensive, edition of this work in 1970 received deservedly high praise, and the present version surely should garner much as well. Alone and in collaboration with others, the editor has been responsible for eighteen previous indices and updates, and is apparently the leading bibliographer in Japan, though understandably, because of the language barrier, is little known in genre circles here. Bibliographies are his hobby, and he has been working in the area of science-fiction for many years.

The total count of books listed in these bibliographies is 7,520, and that of individual short stories is 25,490. This includes juvenile as well as adult works, and there is some overlapping. Ishihara is liberal rather than conservative in his definition of science-fiction——his explanatory notes detail just where he draws the line——so some titles primarily thought of as supernatural or fantasy will be found here. There are also "associational" items by Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne, for example. But magazines, comics, scenarios and scripts are excluded, as are non-fiction works about the field.

What bulks out these volumes, aside from the number of titles involved, is the extent of the cross-indexing and the extensive (and welcome) annotations. There are listings by title, by author, by date, by publisher (domestic and foreign), and even by translator. Photographs of the covers of several thousand titles are reproduced, and references to Japanese computer-accessible editions are given as well.

All this gives readers an excellent picture of science-fiction in Japan. Its publication there accelerated after World War II, built at first on a base of translations of American and European works, and then a burgeoning cadre of native writers. Today it includes spacialized magazines plus all the familiar accoutrements of conventions, fan clubs, fanzines and domestic awards. Some of its firms specialize in publishing only science-fiction and their diversity is impressive.

Despite such a favorable climate, original works translated from Japanese into English are rare, probably because while there is a significant number of Japanese interested enough to learn English, Occidentals who can read and speak Oriental tongues are a novelty, so there are few capable of selecting outstanding Japanese work, and fewer still able to translate it.

Ishihara, fortunately, is fluent in English, and his bibliographies are accessible to American readers. He gives original titles of all stories which have been translated into Japanese, including the contents of anthologies. This makes it possible to assess, historically, the penetration of American science-fiction into Japan. The compendium is also a reference for U. S. authors to determine which of their works have been translated there. The same can be said for European authors (particular those of France and the U. S. S. R.), whose genre writings are also cited in their original tongues.

Fujio Ishihara's background is of interest. He is presently a professor of electrical engineering at Tamagawa University, and divides his time between science and science-fiction. He was graduated from Wasada University in 1957, and worked for the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Company in satellite communications. He obtained his doctorate in English in 1965 following stints as manager of Wave-Guide Research Laboratory and the Radio Wave Research Laboratory, settling into his present position at Tamagawa in 1980. He is still engaged in research and is a member of many scientific and literary societies in both Japan and abroad. His

fiction and non-fiction writing continues, and he seems a man admirably well qualified to work in both the science and science-fiction fields. He is well known to the Japanese public through frequent appearances on television.

Practically the only Japanese fan well known to Americans is Takumi Sibano, who with his wife and daughter were guests at the 54th World Science Fiction Convention in 1996. In recent years he has been editor of the international edition of *Uchujin*, the official organ of the Science-Fiction Club of Tokyo. There is no question but that language is the chief barrier between genre enthusiasts in the two countries, however.

I suspect the prewar origin of science-fiction publishing in Japan is practically unknown——possibly even to Japanese fans themselves. In my own collection, for example, the only item from that period is a translation of *A Honeymoon in Space* by George Griffith, a genre writer who preceded and influenced H.G. Wells. It is bound in flexible hard covers and boxed. The volume has 410 pages and carries thirteen diagrams and sketches, plus a folded-in map of the moon. It was number sixteen in a series, none of whose titles I could translate, and which may not, of course, have also been science-fiction. Ishihara informs me that it appeared in 1910, nine years after its original publication in England, and that the name of the company that printed it "is Fousoudou (扶桑堂)." It was translated, he says, by Ruiku Kuroiwa, "a famous author and journalist well known by old science-fiction fans in Japan. This translation was first serialized in a bewspaper in 1903." It is interesting to note that just as fantastic novels were being published serially in United States newspapers at the turn of the previous century, so were they also in Japan.

Fujio Ishihara's bibliographies are a monumental achievement, physically as well as in contents, and establish for him an honored place in Japanese science-fiction.

Sam Moskowitz

ZOMBIES OF THE GENE POOL by Sharyn McCrumb. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992. 274 pp. 17.5 cm. $4.99 (softbound).

At one time or another, the mystery writer Sharyn McCrumb had access to a copy of Francis T. Laney's memoirs, *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!*, and decided that the fan world of the early 1940's would be a suitable setting for mysteries. The result is *Zombies of the Gene Pool*. (There is also a prequel, *Bimbos of the Death Sun*, which I haven't encountered.)

The basic situation: some thirty-five years ago a group of fans set up a slan shack in Tennessee. Though poorer than church mice, they did their fanac and then dispersed. But before they left they buried a makeshift time capsule, with writings, a copy of Lovecraft's *The Outsiders* (*sic*, twice, and in the middle 1950's?) and miscellaneous junk. Later, the valley was flooded to make a new lake. Now, the lake is being drained for cleaning. Some of the former fans are now prominent, and as a carefully orchestrated, phony literary event the capsule is dug up. Then, to qualify the story for inclusion in the mystery section of libraries, a murder takes place.

This is really all that a curious fan whose memories go back to the 1940's needs to know. There is no point in buying the book, which is badly planned, confused in denoument, pretentious and dull. There is a little *à clef* material among the various misfits, but not enough to justify even borrowing the book. Throughout, snippets of mainstream English lit and fan lore are scattered in name-dropping fashion.

Why should one bother to review this dog, now five years old? Because a warning is needed. It has currently aroused a great deal of attention on the Internet as a document in science-fiction fandom, and it has gained a word-of-moni-

tor reputation far greater than it deserves. That's the reason I (groan) spent five dollars plus sales tax for it. But I hope you won't.

Everett F. Bleiler

MOTHER OF STORMS by John Barnes. New York: Tor Books, 1994. 432 pp. 21.5 cm. $22.95.

Just in time for the hurricane season, John Barnes brings us science-fiction for meteorologists. *Mother of Storms* will probably be labelled as "a chilling ecological thriller," but it's much more than that. A military——excuse me, peacekeeping——strike by the UN causes sudden, rapid global warming, which results in the birth of a superhurricane of unprecedented size, strength and longevity. It spawns a number of daughter storms which proceed to rampage around the planet, doing a pretty good job of bringing civilization to its knees. So the novel is full of flood, pestilence and war; there's famine, too, but it's mostly offstage. There's death and destruction of incomprehensible magnitude. Nations and coastlines crumble. Despite all this, a certain cheerful cynicism that pervades the book keeps it entertaining and amusing.

That cheerful cynicism is also what makes Barnes's near-future society of 2028 so plausible. The world is quite different from the present; the UN has become the dominant political and military power, and the president of the United States is waging a constant battle to regain some measure of the country's former sovereignty. TV and newspapers have been largely supplanted by XV, which transmits the full range of sensory experience. (Needless to say, this has revolutionized the porn industry.) The Internet still exists, but in a greatly expanded state. (It has to be, since XV occupies such an enormous amount of bandwith.) Cars drive themselves. There's also a wonderful digression about a group of self-replicating robots on the moon which starts to model some of the more unpleasant behavior of human societies.

Unlike the author's previous books, *Mother of Storms* has a fairly large cast of characters. This usually annoys me, but I didn't mind it here; their interactions are well handled and informative, although occasionally in moving them about Barnes's manipulations are a bit blatant. (Especially when one character's ex-girl friend, who has just undergone a sudden and not entirely credible change in personality, is swept up by a Plot Device in Shining Armor and transported directly across most of Mexico and a good bit of the States to where she happens to bump into another character.) They're not necessarily all good guys, either, although in this atmosphere ethical categories tend to become irrelevant. Even the Evil American Corporate Magnate is a rather likeable chap.

There's an undercurrent of thoughtfulness in formulating the role of the media. In the world of 2028 there has ceased to be any distinction between news and entertainment. For instance, the romance/porn network sends its characters to world hot spots, where they observe momentous events, think carefully scripted thoughts, and have mad, passionate sex as often as possible. But when subscribers are plugged into "reporters" who are shot, or drowning, or just angry and scared, their sensations are echoed, which can cause global riots with a death-toll as high as natural disasters produce on their own. Conversely, the government can calm the rioters and encourage docility by having the nets broadcast feelings of peace and brotherhood. Does this constitute censorship or mind-control? Who's at fault when people refuse to unplug, or even evacuate endangered areas?

I realize I'm in the minority here, but I'd've enjoyed this book more if it had been a little less, um, graphic. I have a vision of the editor reading the first draft and saying, "Great book, John, but it really needs more sex and violence!" There's a subplot concerning "snuff films" that contributes very little to the story, except to kick off a spate of assassinations that I could also

have done without. (There was already enough senseless tragedy to go around by this point.) And I was disturbed by the gory descriptions of violent death, the least lurid of which had a woman's head being squashed like a pumpkin. (There are worse examples too queasy to relate here.) I realize the point of these tragic vignettes was to illustrate on a personal, graspable level what was happening on a global scale, but I still found them offputting.

I also think the ending would have been improved if the last fifty or so pages had been compressed into about twenty. As it is, everything is dragged out anticimactically, although it's still full of nifty science, continuing slaughter and messages of hope. Incidentally, *Mother of Storms* is written in the present, rather than the past, tense. This isn't as distracting as you might expect, and it gives a certain sense ofimmediacy to the story-line.

I've yet to read a John Barnes title that I've not liked, and *Mother of Storms* didn't disappoint me. It's a very ambitious novel, but he manages to handle his large cast of characters, the proverbially dull subject of weather, and the near wiping out of civilization as we know it with humor and flair. I strongly urge you to find this book——but be sure to read it somewhere inland.

Christina M. Schulman

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"The Day of the Pulps"——concluded from page 103

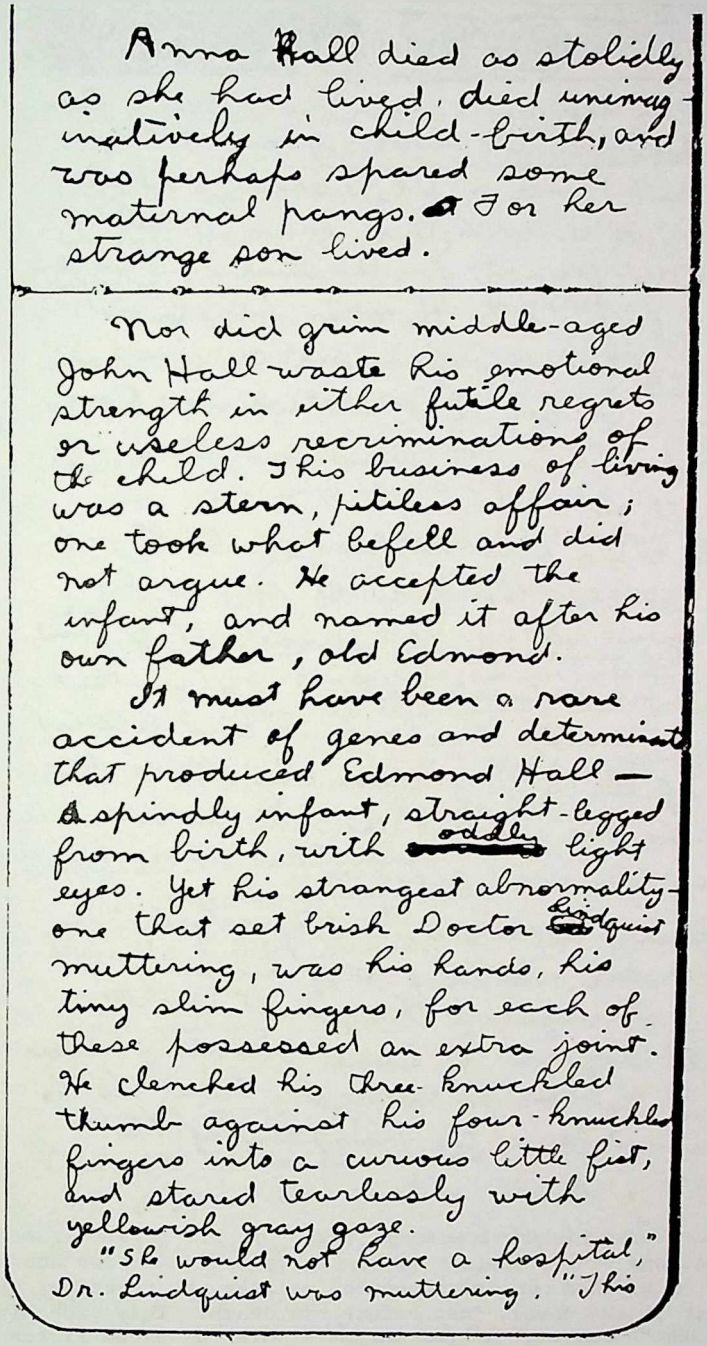
A CHRONOLOGICAL CHECKLIST OF SCIENCE-FICTION BY LESLIE F. STONE

(Numbers in parentheses represent the author's word-counts; an asterisk marks the stories which had colored cover illustrations in their original publications.)

"Men with Wings": *Air Wonder Stories*, July 1929 (16,000).
"When the Sun Went Out": Science-Fiction Series pamphlet #4 (1929) (5,000).
"Out of the Void": *Amazing Stories*, August and September 1929 (35,000).
"A Letter of the 24th Century": *Amazing Stories*, December 1929 (2,400 words).
"Women with Wings": *Air Wonder Stories*, May 1930 (15,000); a sequel to "Men with Wings."
"Through the Veil": *Amazing Stories*, May 1930 (6,500).
"The Conquest of Gola": *Wonder Stories*, April 1931 (5,500).
"Across the Void": *Amazing Stories*, April, May and *June 1931 (78,500); sequel to "Out of the Void."
"The Hell Planet": *Wonder Stories*, June 1932 (14,000).
"The Man Who Fought a Fly": *Amazing Stories*, September 1932 (10,000).
"Gulliver 3000 A.D.": *Wonder Stories*, April 1933 (23,000).
"The Rape of the Solar System": *Amazing Stories*, *December 1934 (6,600).
"The Cosmic Joke": *Wonder Stories*, January 1935 (4,500).
"The Man with Four-Dimensional Eyes": *Wonder Stories*, August 1935 (5,000).
"When the Flame Flowers Blossomed": *Weird Tales*, August 1935 (5,500).
"The Human Pets of Mars": *Amazing Stories*, October 1936 (32,000).
"The Fall of Mercury": *Amazing Stories*, *December 1935 (25,000).
"The Great Ones": *Astounding Stories*, July 1937 (7,000).
"Death Dallies Awhile": *Weird Tales*, June 1938 (4,500).
"Gravity Off!": *Future Fiction*, July 1940 (4,500).

REPRINTS: "The Conquest of Gola" in *The Best of Science Fiction* (1946), ed. Groff Conklin; "The Rape of the Solar System" in *Flight into Space* (1950), ed. Donald A. Wollheim; "The Human Pets of Mars" in *Before the Golden Age* (1974), ed. Isaac Asimov; "When the Sun Went Out" and "When the Flame Flowers Blossomed" in *Los Cuentos Fantasticos* (1950); "When the Flame Flowers Blossomed" and "The Hell Planet" in *The Avon Science Fiction Reader* (1953 and 1968). "Out of the Void" (revised text) has been published as a book: Los Angeles: Avalon (1967) and London: Robert Hale (1972).

"Sources of Inspiration"——continued from page 140



Anna Hall died as stolidly as she had lived, died unimaginatively in child-birth, and was perhaps spared some maternal pangs. For her strange son lived.

Nor did grim middle-aged John Hall waste his emotional strength in either futile regrets or useless recriminations of the child. This business of living was a stern, pitiless affair; one took what befell and did not argue. He accepted the infant, and named it after his own father, old Edmond.

It must have been a rare accident of genes and determinants that produced Edmond Hall — a spindly infant, straight-legged from birth, with odd light eyes. Yet his strangest abnormality — one that set Irish Doctor Lindquist muttering, was his hands, his tiny slim fingers, for each of these possessed an extra joint. He clenched his three-knuckled thumb against his four-knuckled fingers into a curious little fist, and stared fearlessly with yellowish gray gaze.

"She would not have a hospital," Dr. Lindquist was muttering. "This

The Weinbaum poem referred to (note 2, p. 139) is reproduced at the bottom of this column.

As regards the conflicting chronology (note 4, p. 139): Existing manuscripts of *The New Adam* show that it was indeed begun in 1926, when Weinbaum used the blank pages left in his pocket-sized college notebooks for writing during the waiting-times on his rounds as a salesman. The opening portion of the novel still exists today in that form; the beginning of chapter one is reproduced, full-sized, on the left.

In the 1930's, when his wife worked for Chicago newspapers, she brought home scratch paper for both of them, and thereafter Stanley used this exclusively for his stories. Later chapters of *The New Adam*, then, were written on this. Examples are shown on pp. 154-156.

(continued on the bottom of page 154)

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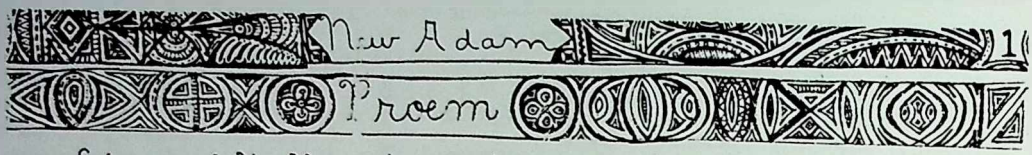
THE ROAD TO HELL

When Man, still uncleansed of his beasthood,
By aeons of struggle and sword,
Unmoved by the prayers of his priesthood
Of a weak and a mortal Lord,
From alpha o'erpassed to omega,
Shall see the sun hurtling to die
Where the moons of the planets of Vega*
Glare brighter than him in the sky.

*Author's note: The star Vega marks the point in the heavens towards which the sun and the planets are moving at a rate of twelve miles a second.



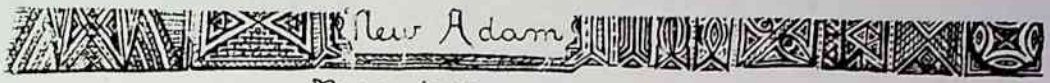
Edmond Hall sat in the deep chair well back from the fire and gazed across the room, now at the cold-bound embers and now at the monkey's skull set into the keystone of the arch that framed the pool of flickering little flames. In the dusk of November they brightened and faded like the star Algol, and when they flared brightest they found a curious echo in the strange amber eyes that watched them, and a faint second echo in the polished, eyeless, grinning little skull above them.

The being in the chair saw nothing of the flames. Though his eyes watched the fire, he saw only what he held in his unnaturally slender white hand, and what he held was a twisted phial of glass that held, in its own turn, death. He shook it and listened to the thin tinkle of its purple pellets, then placed it between his eyes and the fire, so that the tiny ovoids glowed with an evil fungoid effulgence.

"Eggs of nothingness," he mused, "out of which I am to hatch oblivion." And another part of his mind added, "Oblivion is the mightiest thing in the world, since it is the only conqueror of Time. Two things alone are permanent, Time and Oblivion, but the latter is the conqueror, since it stills the trampling of the passage of Time."

Weinbaum habitually embellished important pages of his scratch-paper manuscripts with doodled headings such as appear on the reproductions shown above and opposite. The "Proem" (a preface or introduction) relates the reactions of Edmond Hall, the protagonist of the novel, just before his death. This probably is the same as what he termed "Praemissa" at the outset of his two-paged listing

(continued ⟶)



Prolegomena

Edmond's reflections at the point of death (mention search for Happiness)

Book I.- The Pursuit of Knowledge

Chap.1:- Childhood and Youth. (Remembers Paul and Vanny)

Chap.2:- Youth to realization of difference (Back to present)

Chap.3:- Undertaking of the quest. Happiness in the Laboratory. Horns the monkey.

Chap.4:- Still the Laboratory. (Stein?)

Chap.5:- The failure of science. Futility. (Back to Present).

Chap.6:- The world beckons. Humane knowledge. The opening of the door, and the search for friends. (Thinks of Stein as possibility)

Chap.7:- Vanny and Paul (Assumption). End with Edmond.

Chap.8:- Stein. Accidental meeting with Vanny. Her recognition of him as "that queer E. H." Suggests his coming over (to add to her collection of notables and curiosities, of whom the celebrated Paul is the prize. [And also (chap.7) her own]

Chap.9:- An interlude. He reflects on preceding. Doubts if even knowledge of man points way to happiness.

Chap.10:- An intellectual evening at Vanny's. Paul, Walter, and artistic group. Edmond's quietness. (His views on art, Marxism, literature, sociology, etc.)

Chap.11:- A later evening at Vanny's. Stein the guest of honor and evening is to be scientific. Thesis of dying universe and entropy attacked by Edmond.

Chap.12:- Vanny and Paul. He objects to Edmond. Vanny admits loving Paul, but refuseses to concede freedom to choose friend (End with Present)

Chap.13:- Edmond's doubts. "What am I?" Secret of Happiness bound up in that question. Knowledge barren, futile, lifeless.

Chap.14:- Decision to abandon quest. End as turns to Power. (Then back to present)

of chapters in the work.

This listing, while it was composed after the beginning of *The New Adam* had been recorded in the pocket notebooks, surely preceded his writing the bulk

(continued →)

Book II - The Brief Pursuit of Power

Chap.1 - The pursuit of power. End as he drops it and determines on pleasure (Back to Proem) (What am I?) (Edmond's circle)

Book III The Pursuit of Pleasure.

Chap.1 - Paul and Vanny. He has almost won her.
Chap.2 - Edmond and Vanny. He leaves her puzzled, doubtful.
Chap.3 - The wooing of Vanny.
Chap.4 - Happiness? (Back to proem)
Chap.5 - The forming of the Barrier. Vanny's perplexity and dawning fear.
Chap.6 - The awakening of Eve. (Proem)
Chap.7 - Paul again. Vanny's invitation.
Chap.8 - Sarah (proem)
Chap.9 - Edmond's return and departure. Proem

Book IV - Philosophy and the Death of Reason

Chap.10 - Edmond and Sarah. Paul and Vanny.
Chap.11 - Edmond and Sarah. Paul and Vanny (Proem)
Chap.12 - Vanny sends Paul away Note to Edmond.
Chap.13 - Edmond receives note. He and Sarah to his departure.
Chap.14 - Reestablishment. Happiness?
Chap.15 - Diminuendo. Weakening.
Chap.16 - Weakening. (Stein again) To decision of end
Chap.17 - The Philosophy. End
Appendix - The Philosophy of point of view.

of the novel. Its references to the proem, and its detailing of each chapter by content, label it as Weinbaum's game-plan, the outline of a work he had already thought out in clear detail. It seems equally certain that we can view the proem as a key to the novel's plot and all the action that furthers it.

The facsimiles on pages 154-156 have been reduced in size slightly in order to fit them on these pages. The originals of all this Weinbaum material is housed in the Special Collections Department of the Temple University Libraries in Philadelphia.

BACK NUMBERS

#29 Articles on H. P. Lovecraft, Olaf Stapledon and Stapledon's own [illegible] of man's biological future.

#30 Articles by Sam Moskowitz on C. L. Moore and Olaf Stapledon; By Stapledon on telepathy, and a description of Edward Lucas White's unpublished s-f novel of life in 50,000 A. D., "Plus Ultra."

#31 Continuation of the White material and the beginning of Sam Moskowitz's history of science-fiction, "Voyagers Through Eternity."

#33 Moskowitz describes the first college course on s-f, and Lloyd Eshbach tells the history of Shasta, an early genre publisher.

#34 Mike Ashley researches Algernon Blackwood's early history and Blackwood himself describes how he got story ideas. More about "Plus Ultra" and a continuation of "Voyagers Through Eternity." Letters about Lovecraft.

#35 Articles by Moskowitz on Stapledon, by Ashley on Blackwood, and S. T. Joshi on Lovecraft's "Supernatural Horror in Literature."

#36 Begins serialization of Moskowitz's account of Bernarr Macfadden's obsession with science-fiction. Also articles by J. J. Pierce on survivalist s-f and by Gary Crawford on the fantasy writer Robert Aickman.

#37 Eric Davin interviews the early editors of *Wonder Stories*, David Lasser and Charles D. Hornig.

#39 Eric Davin interviews Frank Kelly, s-f writer of the 1930's; Mike Ashley describes the middle years of Algernon Blackwood, Moskowitz continues his account of Macfadden and his "Voyagers Through Eternity" history.

#40 Sam Moskowitz describes the s-f in the writings of T. S. Stribling; Mike Ashley and Deborah Elkin tell about Hugo Gernsback's early publishing experiences and his relationship with H. G. Wells.

#42 The Weinbaum Memorial Issue, featuring an interview with his widow, articles on his college years and correspondence, and early photographs.

#43 Moskowitz begins a serial article of Nat Schachner and concludes his account of Bernarr Macfadden; Andrew Darlington describes Conan Doyle's fantasy and s-f; and Steve Sneyd tells of the s-f poet, Lilith Lorraine.

#44 The Isaac Asimov Memorial Issue. Four articles on Asimov; also an article on Lovecraft and continuation of Moskowitz's serial on Schachner.

#45 & 46 are combined into a gala 50th anniversary double issue: interviews with Frederik Pohl and Lloyd Eshbach; articles on Taine's unpublished novels and on s-f pulps during the Great Depression; fantasy verse by Robert E. Howard and others; and the beginning of Sam Moskowitz's sequel to "The Immortal Storm." (Count this issue as two numbers when ordering.)

#47 & 48 comprise another double issue: articles on Bradbury, Whitehead, Flint and Starzl; interviewing E. F. Bleiler; Moskowitz's serials continued; an index to letters in *Weird Tales*; book reviews; letters; and much more.

#49 Articles on Poe, Whitehead, Boston and Hubbard; an interview with Steve Eng; book reviews; continuation of Moskowitz's histories.

The above issues (some in small supply!) are available from the publisher. Price, postpaid in the U. S.: $5 each; any eight, $35; any twelve or more, $4 each. Foreign postage is 75¢ per copy extra. Remit to:

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